

*Gerald Paden*

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# Levitical Sacrificial System

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By Gerald Paden



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*“Levitical Sacrificial System”*

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This book is dedicated to my family,  
my wife, Bobbie  
and my three children,  
Mike, Cynthia, and Teddy,  
who have supported me through the years.



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### Special Acknowledgment

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# Preface to the Sunset Bible Study Library

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Since 1962 Sunset International Bible Institute has been a leader in teaching God's Word, training local church leaders and preparing preachers and missionaries for effective ministry. Developed in the laboratory of preacher training and proven in the crucible of practical ministry, the Sunset curriculum has grown to forty core courses used both in our resident school and distance learning applications. In 1989 the Sunset Video Studio was inaugurated to record each course of study in a professional format. Those courses, each with a companion study guide, have been used to teach thousands of individual students and develop a world-wide network of video satellite schools in local congregations and mission fields.

Now in printed form that same library of trusted Bible study material is available through Sunset Institute Press for an even wider circle of Bible students, thanks to a benevolent God, an excellent editorial staff and a number of faithful supporters who believed in the project.

This book is the result of a multi-step process which began with a videotaped course. The voice track of the videotape was first transcribed then formatted and edited from spoken to written style. The goal of the editorial process has been to produce a readable document while protecting the course content and the style and personality of the teacher. We believe the goal has been achieved and that each of the forty books planned for the Sunset Bible Study Library will likewise achieve that goal.

Special gratitude must be expressed to Cline Paden and Truman Scott who began the video course series in 1989, to Bob Martin, who directed Sunset Video Studio, to Virgil Yocham and the staff of Sunset External Studies Division who

wrote the study guides, and to the staff of Sunset Translation Center who edited the manuscripts and to each faculty member of Sunset International Bible Institute who took extra time to prepare and present these courses in the studio.

In addition to the English version, this book and its companion volumes are being translated into the major languages of the world to produce a Bible study library which can be used on the mission fields of the world to mature Christians, train church leaders and grow churches that plant other churches.



A companion workbook on this study is available for purchase through Sunset International Bible Institute External Studies, 1(800) 687-2121.

# Introduction

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This book on the Levitical Sacrificial System is the result of many hours, days, and months of study into the Old Testament system of worship. The author himself admits to the difficulty of the Gentile mind in understanding things arising out of a purely Hebrew culture and environment. Although the words are English and easily read the thought pictures are Jewish and must be investigated with that thought at the forefront. Thus a great deal of thought, study, and meditation will be required to understand the great amount of material presented in this book.

The study of the Levitical Sacrificial System provides an enlarged background for comprehending the standing the Israelites had before God and how that relationship was gained and maintained. It also provides the material for a better understanding of much of the New Testament writings. Understanding the sacrifices offered under the Law, such as the Burnt Offering, helps us get a clearer view of Paul's meaning in Philippians 4:18 of the "fragrant offering, and acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God" he used in reference to the monetary gift sent to him by the Philippian church. The author skillfully leads the reader through the different stages of each Old Testament sacrifice and then shows Christ as the fulfillment of those sacrifices in the Christian age.

This book emerges from the original the course taught at Sunset International Bible Institute. Hundreds of students received this course of study and are presenting it in churches all over America and the World. Many hours were spent in preparing this material for that course of study and resulted in the writing of this book. Much research into the Levitical Sacrificial System with all its typologies was required to bring this study into fruition. The author's love for and faith in Christ Jesus was the motivation behind this study. It is the author's hope and desire that all who read this book will be greatly benefitted, while coming to a better understanding of the sacrifice of Christ.



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# THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM

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**Exodus 19:5 and Leviticus 17:10-11**

## Introduction

Welcome to the study of the sacrificial system. This study comes from the book of Leviticus. In reading Leviticus one might get the impression that it is a very dull and perhaps uninspiring book. However, it is one of the most interesting studies in the entire Old Testament. In this first chapter we will introduce the study of the sacrifices of the law of Moses and give an explanation of the different kinds of prophecy that the Old Testament contains. Then we will study the concept of typology. This is a term that needs to be identified and explained. After that we will enter a study of the sacrifices as a system of shadows, or better—a foreshadowing of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

In the Hebrew text Leviticus begins with the word “and,” showing that it was the continuation of the story that was begun in Exodus, with which it stands as a unit. Exodus closes the primary stage of Hebrew history and begins the story of God’s legislation to his people through the Law of Moses. Exodus is a prelude to and an introduction to Leviticus.

In Exodus 19:5-6 God makes this statement to the children of Israel after he rescued them out of Egyptian bondage,

*“Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession.*

*Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”*

The fundamental purpose of priests is to offer sacrifices to God. Thus God wanted the entire nation of Israel to be His holy priesthood and to become a holy nation. The word “*holy*” not only suggests the idea of belonging to God but also defines the moral qualities that Israel must exercise in its relationship with God.

Then in Exodus 20, from Mount Sinai, God gave the law of Moses with its ten commandments. It was the constitution, the undergirding principles, on which the entire government of Israel was conducted throughout the Mosaic covenant. The laws are called statutes, ordinances and commandments. Following Exodus 20 the rest of the book of Exodus is devoted to the explanation of the building of the tabernacle, to the ordination of the Levitical priests into their sacred functions and then to some initial explanations of the sacrifices that those priests would offer at the tabernacle according to the demands of the law.

These are the four ingredients that are included in the constitution of the sacrificial system of the Law of Moses: the law itself (the covenant), the priests, the tabernacle and the sacrifices. These are the fundamental basis of the study of the sacrificial system of the book of Leviticus.

### **Important Lessons From Leviticus**

Leviticus offers to the student of the Bible many important lessons about God, about daily living under His government and about the daily religious life of His people under the law. Some of these lessons are extremely important even for Christians today, and they can be gleaned from the pages of the book of Leviticus.

One of the first lessons that Leviticus teaches us **relates to the holiness of God**. As a matter of fact, His holiness might well be the major theme of Leviticus. The word “*holy*” and its derivatives appear at least 83 times in this book. Such

extensive usage of the word “*holy*” tells us much about the thrust of the Law of Moses and particularly about the book of Leviticus. Not only is God holy, but His people also are to be holy. His sanctuary is holy, and its sacrifices are holy. Therefore everything is special in the book of Leviticus.

The second lesson we learn from the book of Leviticus is the way in which God **establishes what is called “theocratic rule” in the nation of Israel**. A theocracy is God ruling the people. God wanted to be their King. Therefore, He wanted them to respect and observe His laws because He was considered as sovereign over the people.

The third lesson that Leviticus teaches us is how this book and its worship ordinances **consecrated Israel to a very sacred historical mission that God had in mind** for that nation of people. That mission will become evident as we study the various sacrifices demanded in Leviticus, for these sacrifices are prophetic of the sacrificial mission of the future Messiah.

Lesson four from Leviticus is derived from its revelation of the nature and the consequences of sin. It shows how **sin can frustrate and even break the relationship between God and His people**. Sin destroys the fellowship. It destroys covenant relationship. Therefore, the sins and trespasses that have been committed violate the initial government of God and disrupt fellowship with God. After this, their covenant relations cannot be restored.

The book of Leviticus also demonstrates through the sacrificial system how **God has been able to manifest His mercy and His grace in granting forgiveness** to the people of Israel.

The next lesson we want to learn from Leviticus is how this whole system of sacrifices, priests, the tabernacle and covenant **prepares the nation of Israel for the coming of Messiah**. The apostle Paul tells us in Galatians 3:17 that the law was a tutor, like a primary grade teacher or a kindergarten designed to bring the nation of Israel for the coming of

Messiah. It also confirms the faith of Christian people in the mission Jesus accomplished through His sacrifice on the cross.

Again Leviticus demonstrates how God intended to **regulate the natural tendencies, the natural desires and urges, on the part of the man to worship his God**. This book gives the details of how God wants His people to worship Him. He gives the rules by which that worship will be carried out. He explains to them what is acceptable worship and what is not acceptable. There are examples of those who have violated the worship patterns, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu. It tells of the sobering consequences of this violation in Leviticus 10. Such episodes assure us that God is interested in the worship of His people according to the rules that He established.

The next lesson we learn from Leviticus is how it **defines through its symbols, through its ceremonies, and especially through its feast days the ultimate destiny of man**. Man, quite evidently, was created for fellowship with God, not only in this world but particularly in the world to come. His sacrifices were designed to atone for the sins that alienate man from God. Through these sacrifices the sinner was brought back into fellowship and thereby was assured of his ultimate destiny with God after this life is over. In other words, God is not simply interested in fellowship with man here and now. He wants that fellowship in eternity beyond time in heaven. Even the Sabbath rest was a figure used by the writer of the book of Hebrews to foreshadow the believer's eternal rest with God in heaven (Hebrews 3 and 4).

Leviticus also **declares those eternal, unchanging principles of law that are called ordinances, statutes and commands by which God intended to govern His people through their obedient faith** in response to His law and to His goodness. Law, to be law, must reward those who obey its mandates and punish those who violate its sacred ordinances. The requirements of God's law may change and do change for each of the major periods of Biblical history: the patriarchy, the Mosaic economy and the Christian age. But each dispensation

is bound to observe the laws exclusive to it and will be judged by the laws in vigor during the age under discussion.

Leviticus **establishes inevitably and indelibly the concept of redemption by sacrificial blood.** We read from Leviticus 17:10 that God prohibited the children of Israel from eating blood. In verse 11 He explains:

*“For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves (The Hebrew would say “for your soul.”) on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.”*

So when the law says that the soul that sins dies, either that soul dies under sin or presents to God an acceptable substitute that dies in his place. Such is called sacrificial atonement. Therefore, when the animal gives its blood, it gives its life.

All of this is symbolic of the fact that Jesus would voluntarily give His life for the redemption of the whole human family. Leviticus builds a “blood-redemptive” concept into the whole Mosaic system of sacrifices. There is also **built into the Mosaic system evidence of the Law’s inability to really handle the sin problem.** It was never designed to do so. There are a number of ways in which this book gives ample demonstration of what the Hebrew writer tells us in Hebrews 10:4, *“. . . it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”* Therefore, built into the constitution of these sacrifices of the law, God has given ample evidence that there must be one great, ultimate sacrifice as symbolized by all of the Levitical sacrifices that in reality takes care of the sin problem once and for all. That final sacrifice is Jesus Himself.

At the same time God **builds into that sacrificial system evidence that the law of Moses is not intended to be a permanent system.** It is temporary and transient in nature. Its portable tabernacle was evidence of its eventual termination.

## Levitical Sacrifices Were Prophetic of Christ

### Two Major Prophetic Forms in the Old Testament

The Levitical system became a prophecy. It became prophetic of Jesus Christ and in some way even of Christians themselves. There are two major prophetic forms that are used in the Old Testament. There is one form that is called **verbal prophecy**. It is a simple declaration in verbal form of an aspect of the coming of the Messiah and His life. There are over 300 specific verbal prophecies that give information about the coming of Christ.

In Psalm 2 there is an example of what is meant by verbal prophecy. God said in Psalm 2:6-7,

*“I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.’ I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father.’”*

That is a prophecy of the resurrection of Christ. The apostle Peter makes mention of this in Acts 2, saying that God would not leave Jesus' soul in Hades after His sacrifice on the cross. Nor would he allow the body of Christ to see corruption. Psalm 16 prophesies that in verbal form.

In Isaiah 7:14 there is the declaration that Christ would be born of a virgin and His name would be called Immanuel. In Psalm 22 there is a verbal description of the crucifixion of Christ. In verse 16 he says, “*... they have pierced my hands and my feet.*” Then in verse 18, “*They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.*” This is a description of what happened at the foot of the cross. In Micah 5:3 it was prophesied verbally that the Messiah would be born in the city of Bethlehem. These are some of the more interesting details that explain the sacrifice of Christ centuries in advance. Verbal prophecy is one form of Old Testament prophecy.

There is another form of prophecy that is called “**system**

**prophecy.**" A system prophecy is composed of a whole series of complex events, persons, circumstances and activities that is rolled up into a kind of prophetic form. Such "systems" predict and prophesy out of the whole historical context and thus foretell some aspect of the mission of Christ.

These are some examples of this kind of prophecy. In Numbers 21:6ff Israel had been murmuring against God because of their lack of faith. God sent fiery serpents among the people, and many of the people were bitten and died, or were dying. Then to cure them of the fatal bite of the serpent, God commanded Moses to make a symbol of a serpent out of bronze and to place it on a staff in the center of the camp in Israel. Any Hebrew that had been bitten by a fiery serpent could go to the center of the camp and look upon that serpent to be spared from death. It is from that whole series of events that John draws a prophetic analogy relating to Jesus Christ. John 3:14-15 says: "*Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.*" Evidently John sees a prophecy of Christ on the cross of Calvary in the overall episode in Numbers 21. Numbers 21:16 explains the prophetic analogy. So the fiery serpent becomes a symbol, a system prophecy of Jesus Christ.

There is another prophecy that is contained in a whole series of events described in the book of Exodus: the story of Exodus itself. Moses had led the children of Israel out of Egypt and had brought them into the wilderness, and they are going toward the promised land. Hebrews 3 and 4 tell us the story of Jesus beginning a new exodus. He is taking His people out of their "Egypt" of sin into the kingdom of Christ, headed for the promised land which is heaven itself. Therefore, the whole story of the exodus becomes a kind of prophecy of Jesus Christ and His people under His exodus.

Again in Luke 22:15-16, the last time that the Passover was celebrated with any kind of historic or religious significance was the night when Jesus celebrated it with His

apostles. He told them in that context:

*"I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it (the Passover) again until it (the Passover) finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."*

It is clear from Jesus' words that He considers the Passover to be prophetic and that its prophecies must be fulfilled by Him. That is what prophecy demands. Prophecy has to be fulfilled, or the prophetic anticipation will automatically fail. Jesus knows that He must fulfill the prophecies that are contained in the Passover itself.

The apostle Paul tells us in 1Corinthians 5:7b-8a , “*For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, . . .*” In other words, “*our Passover*” says that we Christians have a Passover too. Our lamb has been slain! The Hebrew people had theirs; it was a physical lamb. Our sacrifice is the loving “lamb of God”—Jesus Christ. His blood has been sprinkled around the “door post” of our hearts through faith, and we have been delivered from the slavery to our sins. We are now headed for our promised land of heaven itself. This is a system of prophecy.

An interesting, but providentially included detail of prophetic information associated with the Hebrew Passover lamb was in fact that none of its bones were to be broken (Exodus 12:46). There would appear to be no particular significance to the demand that no bones of the lamb be broken. But that apparently insignificant detail assumes great meaning when we examine the crucifixion scene when Jesus' bones were not broken. “*These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: ‘Not one of his bones will be broken,’ . . .*” (John 19:36). The legs of the two thieves that were crucified with Jesus were broken because they were still alive when the soldiers came. This was done to hasten their death, so that they would not hang alive on the cross on the day

of Passover and thus desecrate the feast. But since Jesus was already dead, they did not break His bones. Clearly God had already built into the old Hebrew Passover ceremonials confirmation that Jesus did actually die on the cross rather than go into a coma as some have proposed in their attempt to deny the resurrection. System prophecy builds our convictions and our faith about history.

Evidently God foreknew the attempts some would make to deny the resurrection of Christ. So He built into Passover typology the details about the bones to confirm future history.

The apostle Peter draws a prophetic analogy by presenting a parallel between the flood in Genesis 7 and Christian baptism. As the world was overflowing with sin, God brought about a raging flood of water to destroy another flood of sin. The apostle Peter points out the fact that there were eight souls that were saved through water (1 Peter 3:20). In verse 21 he makes the spiritual application to that physical flood that destroyed that sinful, physical world. The spiritual application is this, “*... and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also— . . .*” So there is a parallel. There is a type of prophecy in the flood of the Old Testament that has its fulfillment in Christian baptism. The apostle Peter instructs that the waters of the flood saved Noah from a world contaminated by sin, “*lifted him out of that world and transported him into a world that was cleansed by the blood of Christ.*” It is not that we are cleansed by water, but it is at the baptistry that we come into contact with the blood of Jesus Christ that does the cleansing.

All of these are physical events, a series of events with spiritual implications. In Isaiah 35, the prophet gives some details about the coming kingdom of Christ. There is going to be a way, he will tell us, a highway. It is a way of holiness. The unclean shall not enter in it. The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err in his adaptation to this new way of life. But the prophet gave some physical illustrations of the spiritual realities that Christ was going to bring to His people. Isaiah

speaks about a desert that will be turned into a veritable garden of Eden. He tells about the deaf that will begin to hear, the blind that will begin to see and the lame that will begin to walk. These were physical descriptions of the future spiritual realities that would be accomplished in Jesus Christ. Jesus would turn our sinful desert into a spiritual garden of Eden. All of these examples are physical representations with spiritual applications.

### **Typology – Types and Antitypes**

There is a principle of study in the Old Testament that is called “typology.” There are two Greek words that are often used to define this: *tupos* and *antitupos*. *Tupos* is a type, and the *antitupos* is a counter-type. It is the opposing type. It is like an architectural drawing, a blueprint that gives some amazing details and defines the structure that will later be turned into a building. It is like a pattern that a woman uses to cut out the cloth with which she will make a dress. Typology deals with models of future realities. They are a prototype of things that are yet to come.

The writer of the book of Hebrews extensively uses the concepts of types and antitypes to draw either parallels or contrasts between the Old and New Testament systems.

### **Shadows Versus the Substance**

There is another system that belongs to typology, and it is called “shadows and realities.” It is the substance that casts the shadow. The New Testament uses the concept of shadows a number of times. In Hebrews 3 and 4, as we have already noted, the children of Israel in their exodus from Egypt and their journey to the promised land are a shadow of which heaven is the ultimate reality. Even the Hebrew Sabbath in that same context is presented as a shadow of the future rest of the people of God.

In Hebrews 8:5 the writer talks about the old Hebrew sanctuary, the tabernacle itself. It was physical in structure, but

it foreshadowed the spiritual realities of the sanctuary of Jesus Christ. The Hebrew writer uses three Greek words to define the parallel, or even the contrast. He talks about a “shadow” and a “copy” of a “pattern.” The Greek words are *skia* (shadow), *hypodeigmati* (pattern) and *tupos* (copy). Therefore, the old Hebrew tabernacle was a shadowy copy of a pattern of the future sanctuary of Christ Jesus. In Hebrews 9:23 the writer tells us that the copies of the things in the heavens, which represented the Old Testament system, had to be cleansed with animal blood. But the heavenly things themselves, the New Testament counterparts, had to be cleansed with better sacrifices than these—the reality sacrifice of Christ.

Hebrews 10:1 tells us that the Jewish sacrifices were a shadow:

*“The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.”*

In Colossians 2:16-17, Paul says, as he talks about Jewish food requirements—their drinks, their festivals, their new moons, their Sabbath days—that no one was to judge Christians for their non-observance of those shadow systems, for they were only for Jews.

*“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”*

All of these passages deal with biblical typology that is prophetic in purpose. Jesus used this form of teaching quite frequently in the many parables that He gave about the future

glories and duties of kingdom people.

Shadows not only predict, but they demand the substance that casts the shadow. In Genesis 1:26 we are told that man is created in the image of God. The Hebrew word for “image” is shadow. So man bears the deep, spiritual and intellectual shadow of God Himself. That shadow of man demands the spiritual realities of the intellectual, spiritual qualities of the God who created us.

One thing is clear about shadows; they do not have independent existence. There is no such thing as a shadow without the substance that casts it. You cannot build a house out of the shadow of a tree. Shadows occasionally precede in time the arrival of the substance. Maybe this has been your experience. Late in the evening you see the sun going down and as the shadow of an airplane may pass before your eyes on the ground, it becomes evident to you that an airplane has passed between you and the sun. The shadow may arrive before the substance is visible. But after a short period of time you begin to hear the hum and the drum of the airplane motor, and you know that the shadow had simply predicted and demanded the coming of the airplane, the reality that cast it.

## **Jewish Sacrifices (Sacrificial System) Prefigures Jesus Christ**

Hebrews 9:23 tells us that Christ’s sacrifices were plural in nature. This is because in His one sacrifice, He covers the many different aspects of the Jewish sacrificial system. In other words, there were many sacrifices under the law of Moses. They predict, foreshadow and prophesy different aspects of the sacrifice of Christ:

- In the Hebrew burnt offering you see the consecration of Christ to God.
- In the cereal or grain offering you see Christ presenting unto God the redeemed of the world as the first fruits of his labor.

- In the peace offering you see the reconciliation that Christ brings to the human family.
- In the sin offering you see His atonement.
- In the trespass offering you see Christ defending the righteousness and justice of God.
- In the Day of Atonement you see Christ, not only as a sacrifice fulfilling all the sacrificial typology of the Old Testament, but also as the fulfillment of the priestly functions involved in that sacrifice.
- In the Passover you find Christ liberating His people from the bondage to sin.
- In the red heifer sacrifice you find Christ eliminating and removing all of the physical and spiritual defilements that sin brings upon the human family.

In this study we will be investigating the system of sacrifices under the law of Moses, but we will really be getting a picture of the ultimate glorious sacrifice of Jesus Christ which was offered ultimately on the cross of Calvary.

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# EXPLANATION OF SACRIFICES

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**Deuteronomy 12:5-7**

## Introduction

The study of the sacrificial system has the purpose of presenting some of the major lessons that we need to learn from the book of Leviticus as they apply to the sacrifices themselves. To the superficial reader of Leviticus it may appear that there is not much distinction between the several sacrifices demanded by the Lord. Yet the apparent similarity gives way to the very unique character each sacrifice possesses when further study is made. This will become evident as we proceed through the study.

We will study each sacrifice, its distinctive ritual, and the animals, grains or liquids required. Clear definition of the sacrificial nature of worship and of sacrificial atonement will be given. We must see the definite distinction between sacrifices of worship and those of atonement. There is a definite relationship between sacrifices and the Law of Moses. It is the Law that establishes the difference between the sin offering and the trespass offering.

Leviticus is essentially a study guide to the sacrifices that were offered in Israel, yet there are two exceptions to this. There are two great sacrifices that were celebrated by the people of Israel that are not contained in the book of Leviticus. The first one is the Passover. To study about the Passover you must go back to Exodus 12. The second non-Levitical sacrifice was the Red Heifer sacrifice. The sacrificial explanation relative to the Red Heifer is given in Numbers 19.

## Important Lessons About the Sacrifices

### Distinctions To Be Made in the Sacrifices of the Law of Moses

There are several important lessons that can be learned about the sacrifices and the characteristics that were built into each one of them. One thing we need to remember is that each sacrifice was distinct in its purpose. It had a distinctive ritual that defined the fundamental reason and the thrust of the sacrifice. Therefore, we need to be aware of the fact that these sacrifices were not interchangeable. The sin offering would not take the place of the peace offering or vice-versa. Each sacrifice was distinct. It had a distinctive ritual carrying a distinctive message.

Again, the sacrificial victims or the materials of the sacrifice were drawn from the animal kingdom and from the vegetable kingdom. The sacrifice was distinctive, and the animals that were designated for each sacrifice were distinctive. In those animal sacrifices there was always the shedding of blood. Thus the element of atonement is built into those sacrifices.

There is another kind of sacrifice that did not involve the shedding of blood. Each Hebrew was required by the Law to offer their first-fruits of the harvest from the field. Those were grain offerings and sometimes liquid offerings that came out of cultivated by-products. They were presented as first-fruits in praise and gratitude to God.

### Worship Sacrifices

Now we will notice the two distinct kinds of sacrifices under the Law of Moses. The first sacrifices belong to the **worship** order. Worship sacrifices were called “sweet savor” offerings. That term is quite frequently used concerning some of the sacrifices. Basically, the expression of an individual’s devotion to God was the thrust of all sweet savor sacrifices. Sweet savor sacrifices ascended from the altar of burnt offering

as a “fragrant aroma” offering to God. In a column of smoke that ascended into heaven the sacrificial victim was being transferred to God in the form of incense. The sacrifice was being “fumed” to God from the altar in a curl of smoke. The victim was not perceived of as being destroyed or even burned; it was seen as being converted into smoke and thus transferred directly to God for His pleasure. They smelled good to God, as the very terminology used would indicate. The first of the worship sacrifices was the burnt offering. Through it the Hebrew consecrated himself, his entire life, to God.

The second sacrifice was the grain offering, or the cereal offering. In this sacrifice the Hebrew consecrated the first-fruits of his harvest to God as a gift and as an expression of gratitude. Burnt offerings were offered by individuals and by the nation. Likewise grain offerings were sacrifices by individuals and by the nation. Then the third sacrifice of the worship type, the fragrant odor series, was called the peace offering. It was offered by the individual and by his family. It was a family celebration in which they rejoiced together when one of the family members was restored to fellowship with God.

In all the sweet savor sacrifices it was imperative that the worshiper be in a good standing with God. His covenant relationship with God had to be correct for him to presume to offer to God acceptable worship. Divine worship was an exclusive privilege to those people who knew God and who were faithfully serving Him according to covenant demands. Worship is both natural and honorable, but it is restricted to those who know God and conform their devotions to His holy nature.

### **Sacrifice of Atonement**

The next series of sacrifices were called the **atonement sacrifices**. These were demanded when there had been a breakdown in one’s consecration or devotion to God. When there is a failure in the proper worship that God deserves, sin has been committed and the fellowship with God has been

broken. In such instances, the first sacrifice the sinner was to offer was the sin offering. The sin offering was required under the Law of Moses when an individual had abusively violated one of the first five of the ten commandments that God gave to the children of Israel in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. Those first five commandments have to do with God's nature. Therefore when a man violated the man-to-God commandments the fellowship was broken and the sin offering was required before fellowship could be restored.

The trespass offering involved the man-to-man commandments contained in the second five of the ten commandments. There were also the remaining 613 ordinances and statutes that Israel was expected to observe. Those 613 laws simply gave explanatory definitions of the ten commands. Still, the violation of any law—the ten or the 613—could result in the disruption of the covenant relation between man and God. In such cases of violation of the man-to-man ordinances, the transgressor was to offer the trespass offering.

The sin offering could not take the place of the trespass offering, nor vice-versa. The sin offering had to do with the violation of God's nature. The trespass offering had to do with the violation of God's government. The sin offering restored fellowship between God and man. A trespass offering restored a harmonious relationship between men. It also restored the fellowship within the congregation of the children of Israel, and thus restored the man-to-God fellowship.

The third great atonement sacrifice was offered on what was called in Hebrew the *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. It was offered by the high priest alone who functioned on that day on behalf of the nation. It indicated not only that it was a national sacrifice but also that it had individual implication. The *Yom Kippur* sacrifices will be explained in the last two chapters of this series.

### Sacrifices Were Gifts, Offerings From Man to God

The sacrifices of the Law of Moses were basically gifts to

God—man offering to his God a present out of his desire to please Him and to seek His favor. It has been said that man's first attention to fire was for the purpose of offering gifts to God. Anytime a man wanted to present God anything under the Law of Moses, or even during the Patriarchal dispensation, he would build an altar, place wood on it, lay his sacrifice on top, kindle the fire and thus transfer his sacrificial gift to God in the column of smoke that ascended into heaven. It is probably true that man's first attention to fire was for the purpose of sacrifice because Abel offered his burnt offering to God in the very shadow of the Garden of Eden.

The word "sacrifice" is primarily and initially an offering or a gift to God. But the term "sacrifice" has taken on a secondary meaning in our language. Originally it contained the import of a gift to God, but now it has taken on the meaning of privation, personal renunciation, and self-denial. Now it seems to have more the meaning of giving up something than as an expression of appreciation to God. It was probably David himself who was the first to add this concept of personal cost and personal sacrifice or privation in his offerings unto God. In 2 Samuel 24:24 David said: "*I will not sacrifice unto the Lord burnt offerings that cost me nothing.*" So David added to the concept of a present, a gift to God, the concept of personal privation. Actually the primary concept is what the book of Leviticus is built around, not so much the concept of personal privation.

### **Animals Required for Sacrifices – Domesticated Only!**

The animals that were required for all the sacrifices had to have certain qualities. They had to meet a certain standard. Quality number one was that they had to be domesticated animals. They had to be tame. That simply meant that there were laws that were laid down by God in the regulation of these covenant sacrifices. You find the concept of the first covenant sacrifices offered in Genesis 15:8-17. Abraham had

offered the sacrifices required by God, and it was through those sacrifices that God made His covenant with Abraham. The animals that were required that day were “*... a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.*” (15:9) These all came from the herd, the flock, or the fowl—all domesticated animals. “Of the herd” meant they must be either oxen or cattle. They could come “out of the flock,” and that meant that they belonged to the sheep and the goats. Or they could be “out of the fowl,” and therefore they had to be the pigeon or the turtle-dove.

### **Qualities Demanded for the Selection of the Animals**

The qualities or the qualifications of those animals used in the sacrifices demanded first of all that they be tame, as already mentioned. They had to be domesticated animals. That indicated a kind of close relationship with the owner who offered them in sacrifice. They could not offer the hapless victim of the chase or of the hunt. They could not offer the rogue, nor the savage, untamed animal. The animals offered were not mavericks. They were not wild. They were not the ravenous type of animal. They could not be the wild creature like the lion or the vulture.

The second qualification demanded that they be clean because these animals were symbolically representative of Jesus Christ. Jesus was not dragged to the cross of Calvary as the unwilling victim. We talk about victims of the sacrificial offerings in the law of Moses because the animal was the hapless victim of circumstance. He knew nothing about the law of God, about sin, or about the need of life making atonement for sin. He was totally uninvolved and dumb concerning all of that. But that was not the nature of Jesus Christ. He was a volunteer. He was not a “victim” of the sacrificial atonement that He made.

Therefore, the animal had to be tame. It had to be clean because it symbolized the spiritual purity of Jesus Christ

Himself. To be a clean animal it had to belong to the generic family of the “herbivore.” That means it had to be a vegetable eater, to be by nature a vegetarian. It could not be a “carnivore,” that is, a flesh eater. The lion, the vulture, the ravenous kind of beast would not be a proper representation of Jesus Christ. The carnivore live by destroying the lives of other animal creatures. But to represent Jesus Christ it had to be one that gave his life, instead of taking life.

The animal had to be domesticated, a herbivore and clean. It had to be without defect. The priests scrupulously inspected their animals to be sure that there were no defects of any kind. They were physically without blemish, because they materially symbolized the spiritual perfection and purity of Jesus Christ Himself. For a clearer description of the physical blemishes that would hinder sacrificial acceptance, read Leviticus 22:20ff. An explanation of what is to be considered to be a blemish is given: a wart or any kind of scar or defect in the animal would disqualify it from sacrificial acceptance before God.

### **Males Were Preferred – Symbol of Strength**

Generally the male animal was preferred in the sacrifices. He was the most common victim because he symbolized strength. But at times God specified that the female be offered in sacrifice because she was a symbol of fertility.

### **Vegetables, Herbs, Cereal Grains and Juices**

As far as the vegetables that were offered unto God as cereal or grain offerings were concerned, they had to be herbs, cereal grains or juices that came from those grains. They had, therefore, to be cultivated produce, suitable for human food. They could not be growth that was gathered out of the wild, off the mountainside. They had to be the first fruits of the man’s labor.

In the burnt offering, the man actually symbolically consecrated himself to God. He seemed to be saying: “I give to God all that I am.” But in the grain offerings he consecrated all

that he had to God. The cultivated grains were never presented to God in their crude form. They at least had to be ground or parched. Generally they were made into cakes or patties and were then presented to God on the altar of burnt offerings. It becomes evident that these sacrifices carried deep spiritual implications for the Hebrews. Their devotions were given ample opportunity for expression through significant ceremonials.

### The Order of Importance of the Sacrifices

It is generally understood that the sacrifices are listed in the book of Leviticus in the order of importance. We see the sacrifices listed in their proper order in Leviticus. It can be surprising to find that the **burnt offering** took precedence to the sin offering. Many would think that the sin offering would be the most important among the sacrifices. However, the burnt offering is more important because it stands for total consecration of the worshiper to God. The sin offering, in contrast, stands for the violation of or the default of the consecration. God is much more pleased with an individual who is so completely consecrated to Him that He seldom needs atonement sacrifices. Where consecration is perfect, as in the life of Jesus, atonement is never needed. Consecration is more important than atonement because if an individual is completely consecrated to God atonement is eliminated as a need in his life.

The second great sacrifice of importance in the book of Leviticus is the **grain offering**. It was offered by individuals at any time that they wanted. The **peace offering** is the third great sacrifice. These three are all worship sacrifices, and they do not take precedence to the sacrifices that were offered for atonement. No Hebrew out of covenant relation with God because of sin was accepted even if he offered any of the sweet savor, worship sacrifices.

Those who strayed from the law of God had to offer the **sin offering** or the **trespass offering** to make atonement for

their sins or trespasses. The **atonement sacrifice** for sin could be offered by an individual at any time that he felt his life, his soul, was in jeopardy before God. Likewise the trespass offering was demanded to restore broken fellowship between God and man. Either could be offered by the Jew when he felt that his fellowship with God had been broken. The Day of Atonement was offered only one time each year for the entire nation.

### **The Place of Acceptable Sacrifices**

The altar on which these sacrifices were presented to God was the altar of burnt offerings that stood out in the courtyard of the tabernacle. That was the only place where God authorized the presenting of both worship and atonement sacrifices. The word altar in Hebrew is *mizbeah*, and it simply means “the place of slaughter,” the place of the killing of the sacrifice. Anytime an individual wanted to present to God any kind of gift there was no other way than to place it on the altar and “fume” or “incense” it to heaven. When an individual wanted to give himself to God, he could either place himself on the altar, or else place a substitute victim on the altar to represent him.

The blood of the animal used in making atonement was placed on the altar. The fat which was removed from all of the sacrifices was given to God as a fragrant odor and was “incensed” to heaven. Even the cereal offerings, the grain offerings, were presented upon the altar and transferred unto heaven in a column of smoke. The drink offerings were not poured upon the altar. They were poured out at the base of the altar to Jehovah God. So all gifts to God, therefore, had to be offered upon this altar.

In Exodus 20:24 God explained to the children of Israel that they were to make an altar out of crude stones. No attempts were to be made to beautify the altar, because Israel would not be accepted before God because of the size or the beauty of their altar. Israel would be appreciated for the devotions of

their heart. God promised He would come to the altar: “. . . I will come to you and bless you.” (Exodus 20:24) In Deuteronomy 12:5, He laid down the rules that Israel was to bring their sacrifices of praise and of atonement to the altar where Jehovah had placed His name. And Jehovah placed His name at the Tabernacle.

### The Special Fire Used to Consume the Sacrifice

The fires that consumed the sacrifices upon those altars were actually one fire. They were defined with two different words. There was the *katar*, the fire that consumed the worship sacrifices. This was the fire that caused the sacrifice to ascend to God. It characterized all of the sweet savor sacrifices that were presented to God. We get our word “cauterize” from the word *katar* in the Hebrew. It means “to cleanse.” This was a sacrifice where the fires ascended into heaven.

There was another kind of fire that consumed these atonement sacrifices. Some of the sin offerings and some of the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement were burned with fires that were called in Hebrew *saraph*. *Saraph* is the root word for *seraphim*. They were the avengers of God who rained fire and destruction upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Therefore these fires did not ascend to God in praise and devotion. These were the fires that descended from God in judgment upon sin. Although fire is fire, there are two different kinds of fire that characterized the sacrifices offered to God.

There is perhaps a third kind of fire that is mentioned in Leviticus 10:1 where Nadab and Abihu offered to God “strange fire.” The Hebrew word for “strange” is *zar*, and it means any element, action or person unauthorized by God, whether related to personnel or function in service to God. There was a way in which God intended for them to offer their sacrifices. All violations of those rules that governed the sacrifices not only nullified the worship, but they also nullified the atonement. They brought the offending individual under the wrath of God.

**Rituals or Ceremonies of the Sacrifices**

The ceremony of each sacrifice was distinct and must be so understood. Though the rituals involve deep ceremonies, they are not simply ceremonies or rituals. It would be easy for the sacrifices of the Law of Moses to fall into pure ritualism. Ritualism exists where there are the externals of a sacrifice without any spiritual devotions being expressed by them. The rituals were as characteristic of each sacrifice just as the animals were characteristic of each sacrifice. The ceremonies were similar in some of the sacrifices up to the particular point that exalted the central concept that belonged to that specific sacrifice. The specific aspect of the ritual defined the basic thrust of each sacrifice.

Where is the blood sprinkled in atonement for the sacrifice? What happens to the body of the sacrificial victim that is being offered to God? What is the disposition of the body? Is it totally consumed in the fire, and exclusively toward God? Some sacrifices could be consumed by the officiating in the courtyard of the tabernacle as a kind of festive celebration hosted by God. Thus God honored His priests for their sacrificial intervention that made it possible for the restoration of fellowship between God and the straying child of Israel. And the priest is to be celebrated for his participation in the processes that bring about restoration. In certain sacrifices the body would be burned with the fires that came down from heaven as an expression of wrath upon the sin that had been committed.

**Though The Sacrifices  
Were Ritualistic and Ceremonial,  
They Were the Vehicle of Deep Spiritual Values**

What happened in the unfolding of the ceremony indicates to us something of the deep significance that each sacrifice had. What part did the worshiper play in the offering of the fragrant aroma or sweet savor sacrifices? How far could he go before he was to step back and allow the priest to continue the unfolding

of the ceremony in his behalf? How far did the sinner go when he was offering sacrifices for atonement, and how far did the priests go as they carried out these sacrifices? These are important parts of the sacrificial repertoire or series of sacrifices that were offered under the law. Even though they are ritualistic and involve extensive ceremony, they are nevertheless vehicles for the expression of deep spiritual value in the heart of the Hebrew people.

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# THE BURNT OFFERING

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**Leviticus 1:1-17 and Genesis 22:5ff**

This chapter will introduce the study of the first and most important sacrifice offered by the Hebrew people—the burnt offering. This sacrifice stands apart in its importance from all other offerings of the Law of Moses. The animals required for this offering and the use made of it underscore the fundamental, spiritual lessons that the burnt offering was to teach the Hebrew people. It belonged to the “sweet savor” category of sacrifices and was therefore fundamentally a worship offering.

The name “burnt offering” in Hebrew is *olah*. It is translated into the Greek with the word *holocaustoma*. We get our word “holocaust” from this term of the Greek language. A holocaust is total destruction. However, this sacrifice was not conceived of as being totally destroyed. It was simply transferred to God in heaven in a pillar of smoke. It was the most God-ward of the sacrifices and was given completely for His divine pleasure.

## **The First and Most Important Sacrifice**

### **The Description of the Burnt Offering**

The burnt offerings were the first and the most important of the Hebrew sacrifices, and there are a number of reasons that lead to that conviction. It is not only because it appears first in the book of Leviticus but also because it was one of the purest and most comprehensive forms of worship to God. It belonged

to the pleasing aroma, the sweet savor sacrifices. As that fire ascended from the altar to God, the worshiper could spiritually conceive of God taking a deep, pleasing breath of that sacrifice simply because of the implications of the sacrifice itself. As He breathed deeply He seemed to say: "That smells good!" There were some deep spiritual values that were expressed through this sacrifice.

### **Most God-Addressed Sacrifice**

The burnt offering was the most important because it was the most God-ward of the sacrifices. In other words it was addressed exclusively to God, wholly and completely consumed for His individual pleasure. No part of this sacrifice was given to anyone else. It was for God and for God alone. All other sacrifices of the animal and vegetable kingdom had others who participated in the privileges of the sacrifice. Certain people would receive portions of the sacrifice, but this was not so of the burnt offering. This one was exclusively for God.

### **The Sacrifice Is Not Conceived of as Destroyed or Even Burned**

Another reason that this sacrifice was important to Hebrew thinking derives from its not being conceived of as being consumed. In Leviticus 1:9b the statement is made: "*It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.*" In the original Hebrew of Leviticus 1:9 the statement was made, ". . . and the whole shall be turned into smoke as it ascends unto God." Thus the sacrifice is simply transferred to God as a sweet smelling incense. It is therefore being fumed unto God as it ascends from the altar into heaven itself, as the word *olah* in Hebrew declares: "that which ascends."

### **It Symbolizes the Total Consecration of the Worshiper to God**

The animal became a substitution for the worshiper. Then whatever happened to the animal was conceived of as happening to the worshiper. As this animal was consecrated in totality to God being transferred and incensed to Him, so the spiritually minded Jew with this sacrifice was expected to say to God, “As this animal is totally given for Your pleasure alone, so I want my life to be given only to You for Your pleasure.” All of the sacrifices of the law of Moses involve the concept of vicarious substitution. In other words, there was a stand-in or a substitute that would take the place of and stand in the stead of the worshiper himself. Therefore what physically happened to the animal was expected to be a spiritual expression of the worshiper’s desire: “I want my life to be totally consumed for God’s pleasure.”

In Genesis 22 God asked Abraham to offer Isaac to Him as a burnt offering. The history of this episode sheds much light on the nature of the burnt offering. In verse two God told Abraham:

*“Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.”*

God wanted Abraham to place Isaac on the altar and convert him into that sweet aroma that ascends to heaven. Abraham had offered burnt offerings before, and he knew exactly what was going to be left when the sacrifices was completed—ashes!

What did God want Abraham to learn from this experience? He was demanding: “Give me the boy Isaac without reservation. I want him to be totally mine.” Abraham departed from his home in Heron with Isaac. He took a three day journey with some of his servants, and they went to the foot of Mount Moriah. When they arrived, Abraham told the

servants: “*Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.*” (Genesis 22:5b)

Abraham knew exactly what he was going to do: offer Isaac as a gift to God. But he called it worship. Such an expression of worship defined the basic thrust of the burnt offering. There is an interesting postscript that Abraham added: “*We will worship and then we will come back to you.*” Abraham was expressing his faith that even though he offered Isaac, somehow the boy would survive. He knew that God had already made some promises to him and had made a covenant with him. (Genesis 12, 15, and 22)

In Isaac, Abraham was going to have great descendants; a great nation would be born out of the seed of this child. Yet God was asking Abraham to reduce him to a pile of ashes, and Abraham was going to comply. He believed that God, who is able to give life, is also able to give it again. In Hebrews 11:19 the writer explained Abraham’s faith in these words: “*Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.*” Abraham planned to offer his son and then step back and watch God raise him from the dead.

Let us initially view this episode from Abraham’s perspective as God said to him, “Abraham, I want that boy to be mine. Give me Isaac, no strings attached, no reservations. Give him completely to me.” Abraham consented to this. Then let us view the sacrifice from Isaac’s perspective as his father laid him on the altar. Isaac certainly did not understand. If he did understand, it was without any real understanding as to the purpose. However, Abraham raised the knife and was ready to slay his son and convert him into that sweet aroma that ascends into heaven. But then God intervened saying, “Do the boy no harm.” There was a ram, a male sheep whose horns were caught nearby, and Abraham took this ram and placed him upon the altar in the place of Isaac. There is the substitution. The ram became the vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice in the

place of Isaac.

What did God want Isaac to see in this event? “Isaac, that ram is taking your place, but I want you to understand out of this that you are not released from your responsibility. I want you to be my sacrifice. I want you to be a living sacrifice, where your whole life is dedicated and presented to me.” Think of how Isaac would have felt as the fire’s first curl of smoke began to ascend from the altar that Abraham had built and as the ram began to be consumed by the fire and was transferred as a column of incense to God. Isaac then would understand: That ram *was* Isaac. That is what God wanted—He wanted Isaac, but not Isaac reduced to ashes as a sacrifice. Rather God wanted Isaac to be a living sacrifice, constantly presenting himself unto Jehovah God. Abraham named the spot where the ram was offered *Jehovah Jirah*—which means “Jehovah provides.” Isaac must have been very thankful that his God is called *Jehovah Jirah!* Clearly God did not cease to be the Provider of substitute sacrifices when the events of Moriah were over. He has provided us with Jesus!

The reason the burnt offering had such deep significance for the Hebrew people was because it conveyed this concept to them: This is your opportunity to commit yourself, to dedicate yourself, and to give yourself to God. In 2 Corinthians 8:5 we read of the brethren in Macedonia: “*. . . they gave themselves first to the Lord . . .*” Quite evidently, Jesus did the same. He gave Himself to God completely and without reservation. Jesus was a constant burnt offering.

### **Most Common of Hebrew Sacrifices**

The burnt offering was the most common among the Hebrew sacrifices. It was central in all their worship activities. It was the most frequently offered. It was central in all of their individual and in their collective sacrifices. An individual could offer the burnt offering any time that he wanted. But it was offered also on behalf of the nation every day, in the morning and in the evening. Every day those sacrifices were

offered. God, in Leviticus 6:9,12 and 13, insisted that the fires of the sacrifice of the burnt offering were never to be extinguished. Three times He says in those three verses, “*Keep the fires burning.*” Twice He says, “*Do not let those fires go out.*” In other words, five times He says, “I want your devotion as a nation of priests to be constant. Your worship through the giving of yourself must never end. Your worship must not be seasonal or sporadic. I want those devotions to be a constant expression of your surrender to Me.” It was not simply a Sabbath function. It was every day of every month of every year that God wanted the people to be a part of this sacrificial commitment to Him. The altar from which all Hebrew sacrifices were presented was classically called the “altar of burnt offerings.” The burnt offering was also the central act of worship. It was the heart of Hebrew worship, of all of their feast days and particularly of their Sabbath day.

### **Most God-centered and Spiritually Deep Sacrifice**

As already mentioned, the burnt offering was the most God-centered and therefore the most deeply spiritual of the sacrifices. Israel was to recognize that God has a right to man’s highest devotion. Man owes to God his entire being—first in virtue of creation and then again in virtue of redemption from sin. Such convictions for the Hebrews were best expressed in personal consecration to God. It was offered from believing hearts that were filled with unreserved love and devotion in recognition of His goodness to Israel.

### **Consecration Is More Important Than Atonement**

For these clear reasons the burnt offering takes precedence to the sin offering. Consecration, as already mentioned in the last chapter, is more important than atonement. For when atonement is needed, that means there has been a breakdown in the consecration. Worshipers have not been as devoted and sanctified as they should have been.

**Most Ancient Form of Man's Worship to God**

The burnt offering is the most ancient sacrifice mentioned in the Bible. As a matter of fact, it is the first sacrifice that we read about in the entire Bible. It seems evident that the sacrifice of Abel, offered to God in the shadows of the Garden of Eden was a burnt offering (Genesis 4:1). When Noah came out of the ark after the flood he offered to God burnt offerings from all the clean animals that were placed in the ark. Genesis 8:21, commenting on Noah's sacrifices, says: "*The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma . . .*" He then made a covenant with Noah and his descendants. The covenant was that God would never again destroy the earth with a flood. He confirmed that covenant with the beautiful rainbow that forever stands to testify to the fidelity of God to His covenants. All the patriarchs were constant in presenting their burnt offerings to God.

**The Ritual, Ceremonial, Stage,  
Movement of the Sacrifice**

The rituals and stages of the burnt offering indicate the movements of these sacrifices from one aspect of its devotion to another. As we mentioned in our earlier lesson, there were specific rituals that were required in each sacrifice. And it is in the unfolding of the rituals that we move from one action to the next. Those movements are important. Each action that is a part of the ceremonial conveys deep spiritual messages and has religious implications that the Hebrew was supposed to learn.

By way of review, let us look for a moment at the initial stages of the burnt offering ceremonial. There are four of them presented. There are actually eight that complete the ceremony. In our next chapter we will cover the last four stages. The stages are simply different actions that make up the ceremony performed by the worshiper or the priest. Each action carries its own distinctive message.

**Stage One:** The worshiper presents himself and his sacrificial stand-in to God. From that moment

the animal belongs to God, who then has the right to ordain its usage.

**Stage Two:** The worshiper lays one hand on the head of his substitute, the vicarious victim.

**Stage Three:** The worshiper slays his vicarious victim.

**Stage Four:** The priest sprinkles the blood of the victim in the appropriate fashion upon the altar as ordained.

### **Stage One: The Presentation**

Now let us study the stage of presentation. The word “present” (in English) is both a noun and a verb. It is a verb when it defines the action of offering a gift to someone. The accent is on the last syllable: *pre - sent'*. It becomes a noun when it defines the object that was given. The accent is then moved to the first syllable: *pre' - sent*. So we *pre - sent'* a *pre' - sent*. In the stage of presentation, the individual was seen as presenting himself and his animal as presents to God. Such was actually what was intended by this stage in the ceremony.

As the worshiper appeared before the Hebrew altar with his animal, he expressed this desire: “God, I want to give you this animal as a representation of myself. I want to give myself to you.” This was generally the first stage of all the sacrifices except that of the trespass offering.

It was from that moment forward that this animal, having been given to God, was conceived of as belonging to God. It was no longer the worshiper’s animal. He had brought it from his herd, from his flock or from the fowl that were in his pen. These were animals that belonged to him until he presented them to God. From that moment forward they were God’s. And so this presentation really found the worshiper presenting himself to God, while simultaneously presenting his sacrifice.

Having made the presentation, the worshiper didn’t then turn and walk away. He was still involved in the ceremony because through it the Hebrew thought of himself as being the

object of the remaining stages of the offering. As the ritual moved from stage to stage the worshiper was either directly a participant in person, or else a participant in his representative stand-in. Mentally he was to be meditating on the spiritual implications of his actions and concentrating his heart-felt devotions toward God as a worshiper. He was reflecting on his personal love for God and on God's right to his highest devotion. He was not to simply spend his time watching the ceremony continue; he was to identify with it.

### **Stage Two: The Worshiper Lays One Hand on the Head of the Victim**

Stage number two: The worshiper would lay one hand upon the head of his victim. That was not simply to indicate that this is the animal brought in, to designate ownership, as some have supposed, for from the state of presentation the animal belonged to God. Rather, by the laying of his hand on the head of his substitute, he was thereby appointing the animal to be his stand-in. A special function was being conferred on the animal. Such was characteristic of all of the blood-letting sacrifices. There would be the laying on of hands, whether of the individual Jew or of the priest on the Day of Atonement as he laid his hand on the animal in representation of the nation.

Through the process of the laying on of the hand, the animal was appointed to accomplish a specific purpose. He was being assigned a function. There was an office that he was going to fulfill. In Leviticus 24:14 is another example of the laying on of hands. When a man was guilty of blasphemy, the individuals that heard his blasphemous words against Jehovah God were the first to lay their hands upon that individual and assign to him the penalty of death. Then they would cast the first stone. So when the witnesses laid their hands upon the head of the blasphemer, they transferred to him the penalty due to his sin.

Another example of the laying on of hands comes in

Numbers 27:23. Moses called Joshua into his presence. He laid his hands on him and transferred to Joshua the position of leadership over the nation of Israel because Moses knew that he was going to die.

In a third example of the laying on of hands indicating to us that there is always some assignment or substitutionary process that is taking place, the Levites would take the place of the firstborn of all the other tribes of Israel. And the father of the firstborn child of any tribe would bring his child to the Tabernacle. A Levite child would be brought simultaneously.

All firstborn sons belonged to God (Exodus 13:2,12). But God allowed for the substitution through the Levitical clan. So the father would lay his hand upon the Levitical child, and that child would take the place of his own son.

On the great Day of Atonement, Aaron would lay both of his hands on the head of the goat that was called Azazel. In Leviticus 16:21ff it is said that Aaron would lay his hands upon the head of the goat and would confess over him all of the sins and iniquities of the children of Israel. He would thus symbolically transfer all of those sins to the victim. Then the goat would be led out of the camp, and therefore, all of the sins were symbolically removed from the camp of Israel.

Therefore, in the burnt offering, when the worshiper laid his hand on his victim's head, he symbolically transferred his sins to the animal. The animal was subjected to death for the sins of the worshiper.

### **Stage Three: Slaying of the Substitute Victim**

The third stage of the ceremony involved the killing of the victim. The worshiper was required to slay his own substitute victim, and through the slaying of his victim he confessed his sin. He acknowledged his thankfulness to God for the grace of forgiveness as he transferred to that victim the responsibility of atoning for his sins. The word "slay" in Hebrew is *shahat*, and it defines a sacrificial kind of slaying. In contrast, the Hebrew

word for “kill” in the ten commandments is *tiretsah*, as is used in this verse: “*You shall not murder.*” (Exodus 20:13) There is a difference between manslaughter and *shahat*, the killing of the sacrificial animal. The different words show a different meaning intended, and this is a sacrificial slaying.

It was required that the worshiper kill his own victim because he was a stand-in for the worshiper. This helped the worshiper to realize that he was responsible for the death of his substitute. He saw immediately the terrible consequences of his sin. He saw that the life of this animal was given vicariously, substitutionally, in his stead. It made him conscious of the mercy and the grace of God because he should be the one to die, yet God allowed the introduction of the substitute.

It was in this way that the Hebrew killed his own stand-in. By carrying out heaven’s penalty against his sin, he was expected to manifest his agreement with heaven’s judgment against his sin. The law had said that the soul that sinned would die. So the worshiper agrees with the judgment of God against his sin, and he is literally saying, “Any creature that has the wrong that I did to its credit does not deserve to live.” Therefore, in doing this, the worshiper agrees with heaven’s judgment and carries out heaven’s penalty against his sin. This was how the Hebrew was able to die to his sin. In substance he was saying, “I hate my sin. I kill it. I want to destroy it. I repudiate it, and I destroy it in my substitute sacrifice.”

Christians do much the same thing to Christ because Christians die to their sin at the baptism when they transfer their guilt to Jesus Christ. The Hebrew killed his sacrifice before Jehovah (Leviticus 1:5) because it was a sacrifice that atoned for the wrong that the individual had done against God’s Law. It was his failure in consecration to God that brought about the sin. God’s most righteous Law had to be defended.

This was how the Jew had direct contact with his substitutional victim. The apostle Peter says much the same thing of us in relation to Christ: “. . . you, with the help of

*wicked men, put him to death . . .”* (Acts 2:23) It was our sin that nailed Jesus to the cross. (1 Peter 2:24) When we agree with His death, and we have to consent to His death if we want redemption, it is simply our concurrence with God’s judgment against our sins.

We will cover the rest of the ceremony of the burnt offering in the next chapter. In that chapter we will present the many ways this sacrifice has its primary fulfillment in Christ and then, by implication, to Christians also.

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# RITUAL OF THE BURNT OFFERING

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**Leviticus 1:1-17, 6:8-13 and Exodus 20:38-46**

## Introduction

This chapter will present the completion of the ritual of the burnt offering and then proceed to explain the way in which Christ fulfilled the typology of that sacrifice. Then further application will be made of how the burnt offering has some implications for Christians today.

Let us review the stages of the ritual that were studied in the last chapter. Stage one explained the presentation. It was at this stage that the worshiper presented himself unto God as a gift. “I want to give myself to God.” Simultaneously he presented to the Lord the animal that would be the stand-in for the act of presentation. From that moment forward the animal belonged to God.

In stage two, the worshiper laid his hand, in Hebrew actually “leaned upon,” his substitute victim. That was the symbolic transference of sin, although not literally so. Hebrews 10:4 assures us that it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin. There was, therefore, no literal transfer of sins to this substitute victim, only symbolic transfer. In that way the Hebrew manifested his faith that God would provide the atoning sacrifice that would eventually handle the sin problem.

In stage three, the worshiper was required to slay his own sacrifice. He did the killing because it was in that way that he manifested his acceptance of God’s judgment against his sin.

He so agreed with heaven's judgment against his violations of heaven's law that he was personally required to carry out the sentence that God had imposed upon his transgression.

## The Stages of the Ritual

### Stage Four: The Sprinkling of the Blood

We are now ready to go into the study of stage four. The worshiper had gone as far as he could go. From this point forward he was required to depend on the priest to intervene and carry on the ritual necessary to obtain atonement for his sin and to complete the rest of the sacrificial ritual. The sprinkling of the blood was done by the priest himself. In the Hebrew tongue the word "to sprinkle" is *zaraq*, and it literally means "to splash." The worshiper depended on his sacrificial animal as his substitute and on the priest to carry out the rituals essential for the atoning process in compliance with the Law.

As Christians today, we, by faith, lay our hands upon Christ as He is hanging on the cross and literally, not symbolically, transfer our sin to Him. Then we depend on Him as the sacrifice and Priest to carry out the atoning process through His blood. We also depend on Him to complete the priestly function of sprinkling the blood in the appropriate fashion toward God.

It would be beneficial to us, from a spiritual point of view, to understand that we are literally responsible for the death of Christ. We must agree with God's judgement against our sin in Jesus Christ. We must agree with Jesus' death to cover our sins to the point that we would be willing to join the mob in Pilate's courtyard and cry with the Jews: "Let Him be crucified!" Knowing what we now know, we would have to add our voice to the condemnation of Christ and so agree that our sin was so grievous in the eyes of God that it literally demanded the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We must agree to the point that we would be willing to drive the nails into His hands and cast the

spear into His side to bring about His death. There is a literal way in which our sins were responsible for nailing Jesus to the cross of Calvary.

The use of blood in the sprinkling ceremonies varied according to the different sacrifices, depending on the prominence that the element of atonement was given in the sacrificial ceremony. In some of the sacrifices the blood was sprinkled before the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies. Atonement was central in that sacrifice, for there was a very close, intimate relationship with God as the source of forgiveness. On the Day of Atonement the blood was taken into the sanctuary.

In the burnt offering, peace offering, and trespass offering atonement was a marginal consideration in the sacrifice because there were other stages that were exalted to the primary position. The atonement concept gave way to the primary purpose of the sacrifice: the consecration of the worshiper's life to God.

The blood was sprinkled by the priest on the sides of the altar, the lower part of the altar of burnt offerings in the courtyard. In the sacrifices where the blood was applied to the sides of the altar of burnt offerings, the purpose was to confirm that atonement was not the central point of the sacrifice. In the sin offering and on the great Day of Atonement, the sprinkling of blood was central because atonement was the central, primary purpose of the sacrifice. However, it was secondary to consecration in the sacrifice of the burnt offering. Therefore, blood was sprinkled on the lower half of the altar of burnt offerings, on all of the sides.

The reason the blood was sprinkled on the altar is explained in Exodus 20:24. God instructed the children of Israel to build the altar. Then He said, “*. . . I will come to you and bless you.*” The blessing under discussion quite evidently was atonement for their sin. It is quite clear that the marginal aspect of atonement was indicated by the use of the blood.

Blood was symbolic of life. In Leviticus 17:11 the life of

the creature was seen to be in the blood. “*For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; . . .*” i.e. for your souls. It was because of the life that was given that the atonement was accepted. When the Passover lamb had been slain and its blood had been sprinkled around the doorposts of their homes, God told the children of Israel: “. . . *when I see the blood, I will pass over you*” (Exodus 12:13). So in the burnt offering, quite evidently that same concept was present, “. . . *when I see the blood, I will pass over you.*”

### **Stage Five: Skinning or Flaying the Animal**

After the sprinkling of the blood, the priest would then “flay the sacrifice”—that is, remove the skin. The only sacrifice in which the skin was not removed was that of the Red Heifer. She was sacrificed outside the camp, not on the altar of burnt offerings. She was totally burned, skin and all, and her ashes were used for the cleansing of ceremonial contamination.

There are several possible explanations as to why the skin was removed. Some have supposed a remote analogy to God slaying the first animal and making garments of its skin for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Thus God covered their nakedness. They suppose there might be some kind of symbolic tie-in between the Eden episode and this sacrifice. There is one major problem with such an unverifiable hypothesis. In the burnt offering sacrifice, the skin was not given to the sinner, as in the case of Adam and Eve, but to the officiating priest according to the dictates of Leviticus 7:8: “*The priest who offers a burnt offering for anyone may keep its hide for himself.*”

Others have suggested that it simply means that Christ covers us with His righteousness when we are baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27). Once again, the same problem as above remains, for it was not the sinner who received the skin but the

priest.

My personal conviction about the skinning of the sacrifices is that the animal was to be burned on the altar. Removing the skin would eliminate the stench of burning hair from the temple courtyard. It would be quite evident to us that after a series of sacrifices, both of animals and of birds, the burning of hair and feathers would create an odious smell and would make the Tabernacle a place that would not be at all pleasing to the priest who had to serve there. So I believe they simply removed the skin in order to eliminate the stench of burning hair.

### **Stage Six: Dividing the Sacrifice into Two Parts**

In stage six, the priest divided the sacrifice into two distinct parts. He divided it right down the middle. One-half of the sacrifice was placed on his left side and one-half on his right side. Quite evidently, this was the Semitic or Hebrew way of making a covenant. When two Hebrew people wanted to make an agreement, maybe selling a piece of land, each of them wanted to guarantee to the other the fulfillment of the conditions of the covenant that they were making. They would ritualistically divide an animal, and then literally both of them would pass between the two parts. As they did, each would vow to the other before God with these words: May God do unto me as we have done unto this animal. May God divide me down the middle and feed me to the vultures if I break this covenant.

In this way the Hebrew committed himself to covenant-keeping responsibility. There is an example of this type of covenant in Genesis 15. God was ready to make an agreement with Abraham, "*Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them . . . So shall your offspring be*" (verse 5). Abraham wanted some kind of confirmation on this promise. It was not that Abraham lacked faith. God told him to take some of the animals that had been prescribed in the later verses of Genesis 15, to divide them down the middle, and to

lay each part one against the other. Then we read that a deep sleep came upon Abraham that evening. When the sun was set, Abraham had fallen asleep and “*. . . a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram . . .*” (Genesis 15:17-18). The flaming torch that passed between the pieces was symbolic of the fact that God was involving Himself in this covenant-making process.

The animals that were required were a heifer, a goat, a ram, a dove and a young pigeon (Genesis 15:9). These are the same genera of animals later required in Leviticus. God commanded Abraham to cut the animals in two parts and he “*. . . arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half*” (Genesis 15:10). By cutting them in two and by passing through the pieces, it was symbolic of God’s covenant-making purpose before Abraham.

In Jeremiah 34:17-21, God had called Israel to account for their sins and their deviation from the covenant they had made before God. This system of making covenants underscored the sober, serious obligations made in such agreements. There was a slight variation in the cutting of the animal in the ceremonial of the burnt offering. Normally the process would be done to create a covenant. In this sacrifice, it is clear that the worshiper was already in covenant relationship with God and could not, therefore, be seen to originate that relation. It was simply the God-given ritual that allowed the worshiper to renew his covenant commitment to God. There seemed to be no literal passing between the parts by the worshiper himself, but at least mentally and by faith he did pass between the parts to reconfirm his commitment to keep the covenant and conditions of the covenant that God had made with him and he with God.

### **Stage Seven: The Innards and Legs Were Washed**

In stage seven of the ceremony, the priest washed the body of the sacrifice to remove any extraneous blood. The blood was

not to be burned upon the alter; it was to be sprinkled on it for atonement. Whatever was burned ascended to God as a sweet savor of a fragrant odor sacrifice to God. It was incensed to God. All of the blood was intended to be given to the altar in atonement. The body of the victim was washed in order to remove the extraneous blood and anything else that might have gotten into the body that would contaminate it as a clean sacrifice to God. All the blood that was not used in sprinkling ceremonies was taken to a clean place outside the camp.

### **Stage Eight: The Sacrificial Burning On the Altar**

Stage eight was the central part of the ritual. This final action was the sacrificial burning of the animal's body on the altar of burnt offerings. The priest would lay the wood and then the sacrifice on the altar as an offering made by fire unto Jehovah God. The worshiper was still an observer at the unfolding ceremony. Mentally, devotionally and religiously he personalized the whole ritual to himself. It was he who was being given to God!

The burnt offering was symbolic of the sacrifice of Christ. We need to understand that Christ on the Cross does not represent the burnt offering. Calvary is a sin offering; it is not a burnt offering. Therefore, it is clear that the sacrifice of the burnt offering involved the entire life of Jesus as He presented Himself as one continuous burnt offering to Jehovah God.

### **The Continual Burnt Offering**

#### **Continual Burnt Offering for the Nation**

There were, by Divine command in Leviticus 6:8-13, the rituals governing the “continual burnt offering.” Burnt offerings were offered not only by the individuals but also by the priests on a daily basis as the sacrifices for the whole nation. They were to offer one burnt offering every morning and another every evening. The priest would supply the

sacrifice, and according to Leviticus 6, it was necessary for them to present the offering upon the altar on a daily basis to keep the fires burning. Some three times in Leviticus 6:9,12 and 13 God said, "Do not let the fires of the continual burnt offering go out," because that would indicate that the worship, devotion and commitment of the nation to God no longer existed. That would mean that they were no longer worshiping and consecrating themselves to God. Three times in that context God said, "*the fire must be kept burning.*" Twice He said, "*it must not go out.*" That indicates that God intended for Israel to see its responsibility.

As the fires of that national, continual burnt offering ascended to the Father each morning, the spiritually minded Hebrew would personally identify with it and make a vow in his mind through his faith as he would ask God, "Would you please let that sacrifice that is being consumed upon the altar of the burnt offering in the courtyard of the Tabernacle early in the morning represent me? I want my entire day to be devoted to you." Then he would renew his prayer in the evening sacrifice.

There are some differences in the continual burnt offering. The priest would provide the sacrifice for the entire nation, and it was intended that this sacrifice be a constant reminder to the children of Israel of their obligation to devote themselves to God and renew their commitments to Him. It was to be a constant expression of their worship of God and a reminder of the privilege that they had in their fellowship with Him. A spiritually minded Jew would easily identify with the sacrifice of the continual burnt offering on a daily basis.

The ritual of the sacrifice of the burnt offering was basically the same with some significant exceptions. There was no laying on of the hands, and therefore no symbolic transfer of sin. That just simply tells us that the marginal element of atonement was eliminated from the continual burnt offering. This gave prominence to the concept that its purpose was primarily for consecration, not atonement. The animal was

provided by the priest and offered by him on behalf of the nation. The priest carried on the ceremony without involvement of other individuals.

There were times when God despised and rejected the burnt offerings of the children of Israel. In Isaiah 1:11 and again in Amos 5:21-22 God said some amazing things about these sacrifices that He had ordained. He basically said, “I hate them. I despise them. I reject them.” Basically, the reason that God rejected their burnt offerings was because the whole ceremony of the burnt offering indicated individual or collective devotion to God. However, in these two contexts there was a nation that was carrying on the external ceremonies, but internally they had no devotion to God. They were spiritually committed to the serving of other gods. Therefore, God rejected the burnt offerings on the part of Israel because they were hypocritical to the core. In Isaiah 1:10 God called Israel by the very uncomplimentary names of “Sodom and Gomorrah,” indicating the wide-spread idolatry and immorality of the nation. Therefore in verse 12 God said, *“When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts?”* Then He proceeded to denounce the hypocrisy of their burnt offerings. Such offerings speak of deep devotion to God, but their lives spoke of total disregard for God and for His law.

## **Fulfillment of the Burnt Offering in Jesus Christ**

Now we proceed to the interpretation of the sacrifice of Christ as a fulfillment of the typology contained in the burnt offering. The Old Testament shadow must correspond to its New Testament reality. Hebrews 10:1 says:

*“The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly*

*year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.”*

These verses insist on the “shadow to reality” relationship between the Old Testament and New Testament sacrifices.

There are a number of other passages in the New Testament that present Jesus as a continual burnt offering to God. From Matthew 3:17 God is heard to say of Jesus: “*This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.*” Again on the Mount of Transfiguration that same Divine appraisal of Jesus is given, as recorded in Matthew 17:5. The words “*well pleased*” suggest the concept of a “sweet savor” devotion that God found in Jesus.

Jesus devoted Himself, “*Yet not what I will, but what you will*” (Mark 14:36). Such consecration to God was characteristic of the entire life of Christ. In John 17:19 Jesus said in prayer to the Father: “*For them (the apostles) I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.*” In other words: “I consecrate myself to you so that the apostles may have a living example of the total devotion every man owes to God.”

There is a beautiful passage in Ephesians 5:1-2 in which the apostle Paul mentions the fact that Jesus is a burnt offering sacrifice to God Himself.

*“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”*

The terms “fragrant offering” and “sacrifice” are terminology that have to do with worship sacrifices, and they come fresh from the pages of Leviticus. It is, therefore, evident that Jesus presented Himself constantly as the continual burnt offering to God, never reserving for Himself any service and never committing a sin.

In reality the burnt offering of Christ covered 32 years of

His life, and that made it possible for Him then to ascend the cross of Calvary as the sin offering without blemish and spot. He was pure because He never allowed the fires on His altar of devotion to go out; He always kept them burning! Day after day and month after month, Jesus gave Himself completely to Jehovah God. Hebrews 10:7 contains a citation from the Psalm 40:6 and 8: "*Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, O God.'*" Such was always the ultimate purpose and the consuming desire of Jesus Christ. In John 2:17 the disciples remembered that it was written of Him, "*Zeal for your house will consume me.*" That is what the Hebrew language says in Psalm 69:9 from which John quoted. Jesus' entire life was the fulfillment of all the shadow sacrifices of the burnt offering. He placed Himself on the altar of burnt offerings and consecrated and incensed Himself to God without interruption, and the fires of His zeal for Jehovah God never terminated.

## **Christians Expected to Respond in Like Mind**

### **We Are to Imitate Christ**

Do Christians offer continual burnt offerings? Not physically, but spiritually, yes. We Christians are required to imitate Christ. Ephesians 5:1 says:

*"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."*

This passage does not discuss the cross of Calvary. The cross was not "sweet savor" to God, though He required it for our salvation.

### **We Are to Present Our Bodies**

There is a beautiful passage in Romans 12:1. Paul said,

*“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

The Greek word for “offer” conveys the meaning of “pleasing to God,” which means sweet savor or fragrant odor. Such a burnt offering of Christians is seen as a “spiritual act of worship.”

Christians are expected to imitate Christ and give their lives in devotion to God. Paul added in Romans 12:2 that we must not conform to the world because that would taint the sacrifice. Christians are expected to ascend the altar as an expression of praise. They are to allow the fires of their zeal and consecration for Jehovah God to ascend continually to Him as their part in the fulfillment of the typology found in the great burnt offering sacrifice in the book of Leviticus.

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# GRAIN OFFERING AND DRINK OFFERING

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## Leviticus 2

### The Purpose of the Grain Offering

*Korban* is the Hebrew word that defines the grain offering. Its basic meaning is: given to God. Mark interprets the word in 7:11:

*“But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: ‘Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban’ (that is, a gift devoted to God) . . .”*

There were several examples of these kinds of gifts given in the Old Testament. Generally they were given in recognition of the worthiness of the person who received the gift. Also, it seems evident that they were given to increase friendly relationships between the donor and the donee.

In Genesis 32:13 we read of Jacob sending a gift to Esau—quite evidently to seek his favor. In Genesis 43:11 Israel, the father of the twelve tribes, sent a gift, a *korban*, to Joseph who was then regent over the land of Egypt. In 2 Samuel 8:2 there is another example of gifts that were given in recognition of the dignity of the person who received them. They were given to God not only in acknowledgment of His worthiness and dignity but also as a deep expression of

gratitude for His goodness and providence.

The first fruits of the land were always required by God on the part of Israel. First fruits were demanded from the land and from their beasts. The first fruits sacrifice was one belonging to the sweet savor or the fragrant odor category. It was therefore patently a sacrifice of worship and praise to God. In the burnt offering, the Hebrew seemed to be saying to God, "I want to give all that I am to you." Then in the grain offering the Hebrew was found to be saying, "I want to give you all that I have."

When the Hebrew gave "all that I am" in the burnt offering, and then gave "all that I have" in the grain offering, there was absolutely nothing left to give. These two sacrifices, viewed together, communicated to the Hebrew just how completely and unreservedly he belonged to God. God's total claim on his life was vindicated by these two sacrifices.

## Differences Between Grain Offering and Burnt Offering

There are some significant differences between the burnt offering and the grain offering. Though both were "made by fire," both belonged to the fragrant aroma category and both were "fumed" to God on the altar of burnt offerings, each was unique in several ways. In the burnt offering life was given, and this was not so of the cereal offering. Blood was shed in atonement in the first, but there was **no blood shed nor life taken** and no atonement concept associated with the grain offering. There was **no confession of sin** in the grain offering. It was strictly a gift of gratitude to God. There was absolutely no thought of buying the favor of God associated with this sacrifice. Its ceremonies amply confirm that fact.

**Only cultivated grains** could be presented in this sacrifice, and they were never in their original or crude state. At the very least they had to be ground into flour or parched before they were presented. Generally, the Hebrew would

make this flour and the grains that he would cultivate into cakes and would lay those cakes before the priest who would then place them upon the altar as an offering to Jehovah God.

It was **offered on the altar as was the burnt offering**. It was fumed or incensed to God and therefore manifestly was an act of worship. As a matter of fact, it was one of the purest forms of worship, for in the burnt offering there was a secondary purpose of atonement. However, in this sacrifice there were no secondary purposes. The original and only purpose was to consecrate to God, out of a deep sense of gratitude, the unmixed devotions of the Hebrew through the consecration of all his substance.

In the meal offering, the basic thrust was **consecration of an individual's possessions** to God. It was given in daily recognition of God's worthiness of Israel's praise and thanksgiving, and it was to be given without reservation. It insisted that there was no essential separation between the religious life of a person and what might be called his secular life, because all of man's life—body, soul and spirit—belong to God simply in virtue of creation. Also, since Israel had been redeemed, not only in creation but in recreation, Israel belonged to God. Therefore all of the resources of body, soul and spirit belong to God as an expression of religious *korban*. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:31 that there was no separation to be made between the religious life of an individual on Sunday and the rest of the week. He said: "*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*"

In Deuteronomy 26 there is an interesting passage of scripture that explains something of the background from which this sacrifice arose. It begins by telling about the early history of the children of Israel. They went down into Egypt, and while enslaved there, they became a numerous nation. They were delivered by God and brought into the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey. God's redemptive activity toward Israel evoked grateful acknowledgment by the people. As the Hebrew harvested his crop, he would bring the

first-fruits as a gift to God.

At the offering of the gift the Hebrew would say:

*“My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous. But the Egyptians mistreated us and made us suffer, putting us to hard labor. Then we cried out to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression. So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with miraculous signs and wonders. He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey; and now I bring the firstfruits of the soil that you, O LORD, have given me. Place the basket before the LORD your God and bow down before him. And you and the Levites and the aliens among you shall rejoice in all the good things the LORD your God has given to you and your household.”* (Deuteronomy 26:5-11)

It is quite clear that this sacrifice was an expression of praise and gratitude for the providence of God who not only gave them Canaan but also fruitfulness in the land. They brought some of the “*milk and honey,*” the first fruits of their crop, and presented it in expression of praise to Jehovah.

## The Amount of Grain/Flour to be Offered

The amount of grain that was required in the offering was not the total crop, quite evidently. They only offered what was called “a tenth of an ephah,” which was called in Leviticus 2:2 a “*memorial portion.*” In Hebrew measure, that would be about three quarts of ground flour. That was about the amount that would be required to sustain a man in his daily food. The

Lord always required the first fruits of man, of animal, and of the field.

Paul makes a statement in Romans 11:16 that needs to be remembered by the Hebrew but particularly remembered by the Christian: "*If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy . . .*" In other words, the portion that is presented upon the altar is holy. It belongs to God. It is special. It is dedicated in sacrifice to Him. It is consecrated to Him. However, that does not mean that the rest of it is unholy, or that it is to be treated or used however a man may choose. It means that everything a man has must be dedicated to God. All of a man's resources must be used for purposes God sanctions and in ways consistent with His law.

## **The Ingredients of the Grain Offering**

### **Frankincense – Or Incense**

There were certain required ingredients that were included in this sacrifice. The first ingredient was incense. In the entire Bible incense is always a symbol of prayer. So as the Hebrew presented to God the first-fruits of his harvest, he did so with a prayerful expression of gratitude, as Deuteronomy 26 commands. To represent the prayer, the Hebrew was to add incense to express externally his gratitude.

In Psalm 141:1-2, we read these words as David was presenting his prayer to Jehovah God:

*"O LORD, I call to you (in prayer); come quickly to me (in other words, give attention to my prayer). Hear my voice when I call to you. May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice."*

The sweet savor column of incense that ascended to the Father arose from a devoted heart of gratitude. The evening sacrifice related to the continual burnt offering. The continual

burnt offering, presented every morning and again each evening, was to be accompanied by a continual grain offering.

In Exodus 30:8 God commanded the Levitical priests to offer incense every day in the Tabernacle as a part of the national worship to Jehovah God. In Luke 1:10 we find Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, offering incense in the temple in Jerusalem at the hour of prayer. To confirm that incense is symbolic of prayer, read Revelation 5:8. You will find the four living creatures and the 24 elders, 28 personages, standing around the throne of God, each of them “*... holding golden bowls full of incense, ...*” as least 56 bowls in all. John explains that the bowls of incense are “*... the prayers of the saints.*” Then in Revelation 8:3 an angel comes, “*He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, ...*”

Possibly the “*much incense*” that was added to the 56 bowls is symbolic of the intercession of Christ on behalf of His people. These 56 bowls of incense and the “*much incense*” representing the intercession of Christ are all poured out on the altar before God. Thus it is evident that Christ joins together with His church to share in praise and supplications. When He, being the head of the church, the body, joins His intercession with ours, things immediately begin to happen on the face of the earth. Surely God is sensitive to the prayers of His people.

All our gifts to God—our contributions, whether in the collection plate on Lord’s day morning or gifts to others out of the resources that we have from God’s providence, ought to be given with a prayerful heart that gives with a deep sense of gratitude. “I thank you, God, for giving me the opportunity to share with others and to express to You my gratitude for Your gifts to me.”

### **Oil Must Be Included in Every Sacrifice**

The second ingredient that was added to the grain offering was oil. It was probably olive oil or oil extracted from other vegetables. In the Old and New Testaments oil was always a symbol of consecration. As in the burnt offering, during the

final stage the entire body of the sacrifice was consecrated to God, so in the ceremony of the grain offering there was the addition of oil which was symbolic of the anointing processes. In the Old Testament, individuals who were inaugurated into sacred service were always anointed with oil. In Old Testament times, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed with oil to consecrate them to their divinely appointed ministries.

There is something sacred about unity among brethren, for it consecrates their fellowship. In Psalm 133:1-3 it is stated:

*"How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore."*

Leviticus 8 and 9 describe the ceremony used by Moses when he consecrated Aaron and his sons into the priestly office. He poured great quantities of oil (about three quarts) on Aaron's head. It was called the oil of consecration, and it indicated that Aaron was then devoted exclusively to the service of God. Hebrews 1:8-9 quotes from Psalm 45:6 as the Father is speaking to Jesus:

*"Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."*

The "oil of joy," symbolic of divine gladness, indicates that Jesus was always consecrated to Jehovah God in the great office of His Kingly, Priestly and Prophetic function. Therefore, the Hebrew would add this element of consecration

by adding the oil to his grain offering.

### Salt – “Of the Covenant”

The third ingredient that was added to the grain offering was salt. Salt was always, in Old Testament and New Testament symbolism, a sign of covenant. Just as incense was a symbol of prayer and oil was a symbol of consecration, salt was always a symbol of covenant. It was used to establish covenant relation, to confirm standing covenants or to renew covenants. As the burnt offering was cut down the middle in renewal of the covenant, so salt was added to the grain offering in renewal of covenant responsibility in the use of resources.

In Leviticus 2:13 God says,

*“Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings.”*

Salt was intended by God to stand as a symbol of their two-way covenant. There are other passages that indicate the same concept. In Numbers 18:19 God explained to Israel that He had given the Levites their share, their portion from the altar. They got to participate in the animals that were sacrificed there. They would get their share for God said: *“It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the Lord for both you and your offspring”* (Numbers 18:19b). The Levites had no land inheritance in the division of the land of Canaan once Israel had conquered the land. Therefore God gave them their portion from the nation’s offerings to Him—with a “covenant of salt.”

In 2 Chronicles 13:5 God explained to Israel:

*“Don’t you know that the LORD, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants forever by a covenant of salt?”*

Since the grain offering was a worship sacrifice offered by

one who was already in a covenant relationship with God, the salt was added to confirm and renew the covenant obligation.

When Christians make their contributions to God, mentally and with deep spiritual implications, they should add these three ingredients. There should be the incense of prayerful gratitude. They should add the oil of personal and substantial consecration to God, and the salt of their covenant responsibility should be generously added to their gifts.

In Mark 9:49 Jesus said: "*Everyone will be salted with fire.*" The fire discussed in this verse evokes the language of Leviticus 2. The fire must relate to the altar where the individual consecrated a sweet savor sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Since Jesus is giving kingdom legislation, He demands that every one have this covenant commitment to the Lord God as he presents himself at the altar. Of course, there is no literal "altar" in the New Testament church, only symbolism borrowed from the Hebrews.

Jesus said in Mark 9:50: "*Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again?*" The Greek would more directly ask: "Wherewith will you season it?" In other words, if a man loses his covenant standing before God, how can he ever be "sweet savor" to God? There is no way he can be pleasing to the Lord. His gifts are not sweet savor to God. They are not fragrant odor. Then Jesus imperatively commands: "*Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other*" (Mark 9:50b). In Matthew 5:13 Jesus said that Christians are the salt of the earth. That means that they are God's covenant with this world. Quite evidently Jesus Himself is the one who keeps the world and not Christians. We are just simply God's covenant with this earth.

## **Ingredients Excluded From the Grain Offering**

Just as there were three ingredients that were added, there were also two ingredients that were excluded from the grain offering. The first one was yeast, and the second was honey. As

the incense symbolized a prayer, as the oil symbolized consecration and as the salt symbolized covenant, yeast or leavening symbolized the corruption and decay that is characteristic of it. Even honey is subject to fermentation and therefore was excluded as an additive to the grain offering. They were not intrinsically evil elements, for Leviticus 2:12 demanded that they be brought as a part of their first-fruit gifts. They were simply excluded from the grain offerings because of symbolism.

At the Passover of the children of Israel, they were required to remove all leaven from their homes because it was symbolic of Egyptian immorality and idolatry. Jesus said in Matthew 16:6, “*Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*” Also, in Luke 12:1 He explained what that Pharisical leaven was: “. . . which is hypocrisy.” Jesus warned the disciples concerning the Pharisees who played at religion. On the outside they appeared to be very religious. They were like white painted tombs, beautiful on the outside, but on the inside full of dead men’s bones.

In 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 the apostle tells us that our Passover has also been sacrificed, “*For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*” (5:7b) Then Paul urges us to purge out the old leaven so that we can keep the feast of Christianity with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, not of iniquity and unrighteousness. In Galatians 5:9 Paul said, “*A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.*” In other words, a little leaven leavens a whole lump.

## The Foreshadowing of Jesus Christ

### The First Fruits of Jesus’ Activity

The grain offering typology has its fulfillment in Christ Jesus. There are several passages of scripture in the New Testament that give confirmation of the fact that Jesus also offered the first fruits of His activity. Basically the question is: what was the activity of Christ? Was He a carpenter? No!

Jesus' activity was that of a Savior, and therefore those who are saved are His first-fruits gift to Jehovah God.

### **The “Saved” Are the First Fruits of Christ**

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 2:14-15,

*“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance (the sweet savor) of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.”*

Christians are Christ's fragrant aroma gift to God.

James 1:18 says of God: *“He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.”* Christians are the first-fruits of the redemptive activity of Jesus Christ. We read in Revelation 14:4 about the 144,000. He tells us: *“They follow the Lamb wherever he goes.”* Therefore they are Christians. Then John adds this thought: *“They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.”* Jude informs us in verse 24 that on the great day of days, Jesus will *“. . . present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.”* All of these Biblical references confirm that Jesus is the primary fulfillment of the typology built into the old Hebrew grain offering.

### **The Grain Offerings of Christians**

Christians offer the sacrifice of grain offerings, not in the physical sense of the Hebrews but spiritually. Our gifts are the first-fruits of our labor, and they belong to God. Our gifts to God of a financial nature are defined by Paul: *“They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God”* (Philippians 4:18). There are three phrases Paul used in this

verse to convey the concept of sweet savor sacrifices. Again Hebrews 13:15-16 says:

*“Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”*

The series of first-fruit offerings include praise, confession, doing good, and sharing.

The passages of 1 Peter 2:5 and 9 are necessary when examining the Christian’s fulfillment of the Old Testament grain offering typology. Peter presents Christians as a “holy temple” and the “royal priests” that serve in the temple, with the people of God themselves being “spiritual sacrifices” offered to God. Verse 5 says

*“. . . you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”*

The concept of “acceptable sacrifices” suggests that they belong to the sweet savor category.

The terminology used by Paul in Romans 15:15b-16 is highly suggestive of priestly sacrificial activity. The passage reads:

*“. . . because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”*

The word “minister” comes from the Greek and is a word defining a liturgical service. Liturgy, in the Greek, always

relates to a religious ceremony devoted to God. Paul saw himself as “liturgically” presenting the gospel to the Gentiles. Actually, the Greek words “priestly duty” are a verbal action of “priesting” the gospel. Paul was functioning at a symbolic altar—offering as a priest God’s gift of the gospel to the Gentiles.

Those who accepted heaven’s gift by obedient faith, Paul then symbolically placed on the same altar and presented them to God as an acceptable (sweet savor) sacrifice. So Paul sees the preacher of the gospel as a kind of two-way priest—first “priesting” God’s gift to men, and then secondly as a priest “presenting” in sacrificial fashion those converts to God as his “first-fruit offering.” This passage is filled with terminology from the pages of Leviticus.

In summary, a Christian’s worship begins with his “presentation” (first stage of all Levitical sacrifices) to God on the symbolic altar as a burnt offering. He is a living, holy and acceptable gift to God. Having given himself, he is then qualified to offer the New Testament counterpart to the Old Testament grain offerings. Thus he gives of the financial resources God has providentially given him. He shares his money with the needy to promote the progress of the kingdom of Christ. He does good deeds at every opportunity for all these spiritual sacrifices are well pleasing to God. He involves himself in the evangelistic activity or in the presenting of the gospel to the lost in hope that he can then present those converts to God as first-fruits of his soul-winning zeal.

All the typology relative to the Hebrew grain offering is amply fulfilled—first by Christ, then by His people.

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# THE PEACE OFFERING

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## Leviticus 3

In this chapter we will study Leviticus 3 in which is found the presentation of the peace offering. It was the third great sacrifice that belonged to the sweet savor category. It was one of the worship sacrifices, and it was offered by the worshiper himself who was in good standing with God. We will look at its distinctive ritual because it offers some significant changes. The disposition of the sacrificial body is quite different from all other animal sacrifices in Leviticus.

### The Purpose of the Peace Offering

It is important to see this peace offering, also called the fellowship offering, as a festive banquet that intensifies the fellowship and enjoyment of fellowship between a man and his God. It is the most joyful of all of the sacrifices of the Law of Moses because it involves the festive celebration of peaceful relationships between a man and his God, a man and his family, and certainly with a man himself.

### The Significance of Its Name

The name of the sacrifice of the peace offering in Hebrew is *shelem*, which is derived from the word *shalom*, which is the Hebrew term for peace. It was and is still used as a greeting among Hebrew people. Here, however, it is presented in the plural form, *shelamim*, and therefore indicates that it is peace of a multi-directional nature. It creates good relationships, as

already mentioned, between God and man, between men themselves and with the man himself.

The Hebrew people also called this the sacrifice of completion. *Shelem* has the meaning of making up that which is lacking or supplying that which is wanted. It therefore tends to complete the sacrificial repertoire that was involved when a Hebrew strayed from God and lost his fellowship with God because of his sins or trespasses. Then if he wanted to come back to God, repenting and restoring good fellowship with Him, the first thing he was to do was to offer the sin offering or the trespass offering to make atonement. It was not proper for him to presume to offer the peace offering while still in a state of alienation or broken fellowship with God. It was called an abomination by the Hebrews for one to offer a peace offering when he was not in good covenant standing before God. Therefore, the first sacrifice demanded when a man was alienated from God was not the peace offering nor the burnt offering—it was the sin offering. The sin offering was for atonement that led to fellowship, and it was fellowship that led to the festive celebration between the individual and God. Therefore, as always characteristic, peace had to be restored, or peaceful relationships had to be restored, before a man could participate in this festive banquet.

It is quite clear, according to Hebrew instruction in the Law of Moses, that no person outside of a covenant relationship with God could offer this sacrifice because “their pollution was in them.” A Hebrew could not even accept an animal from a person who was uncovenanted and then use that animal as a sacrifice of the peace offering. The participants at this offering had to be in fellowship with God. Therefore, the main object of this sacrifice was the final stage of the restoration process. That led to the festive sacrificial meal designed to express and intensify the gratitude for restoration. Naturally, thanksgiving for renewed fellowship was enjoyed.

Until atonement was made, it would not have been proper in any way for the Jew to participate in the peace offering.

Leviticus 7:18-21 tells us that a person who had been cut off from God did not have the privilege of participating in this sacrifice. In Psalm 116:17 David said, "*I will sacrifice a thank offering* (that is the peace offering in the Hebrew) *to you and call on the name of the LORD.*" What is the purpose of the call? Quite evidently, the purpose is, "God, I want to intensify the sense of fellowship, union and friendship between us."

## Three Kinds of Peace Offerings

### The Peace Offering of Thanks to God

The peace offering was divided into three different kinds of peace offering sacrifices. The first one was called a thank offering. In the Hebrew language of Leviticus 22:29 the term is *horah*, and it has an equivalent interpretation. That word *horah* seems to mean "hooray." It means "Hallelujah, thank you Lord!" It was called the sacrifice of thanksgiving because God had restored the peace. He had accepted atonement and had judged as proper the individual who had offered the sacrifice. Atonement had been accepted, and therefore the individual was back into fellowship with God. This was the highest level of peace offering, the *horah*.

Leviticus 7:15 says that the body of this *horah* animal, which was consumed in the festive celebration, had to be eaten on the first day of the sacrifice. It was a joyful banquet, a sacrificial meal. Any portion that was left over after the first day had to be burned outside the camp, not upon the altar of burnt offerings. It could not be eaten on the second day. This was not for consecration of self unto God—that was the burden of the burnt offering. This sacrifice was to intensify fellowship.

Failure to comply with the ordinances regulating the peace offering would profane the name of God, as Leviticus 22:26-31 indicates. The animal had to be without a blemish of any kind. The fowl were generally excluded from the sacrifice simply because there was not enough flesh on birds to make arrangements for a festive banquet.

**The Peace Offering of a Vow**

The second type of peace offering was a lower grade sacrifice. In Hebrew it was called the *neder*. In Leviticus 22:21 this was a sacrifice that accompanied the making of a vow and an oath. It had the concept of standing before God enjoying the fellowship restored through new commitments to Him. The man could renew his vow to God or perhaps to his family and do so in peace with both.

Since this was a lower grade sacrifice any portion of the animal that was left over from the first day could be consumed on the second day according to Leviticus 19:5-6. But they could not eat it on the third day because that would have defiled the sacrifice and the worshiper himself. It also would have profaned the name of God (Leviticus 19:7-8). The flesh begins to see corruption on the third day. There may be some confirmation of that fact in the resurrection of Lazarus. In John 11:39 Jesus was told that the body of Lazarus had the odor of the decaying flesh after four days in the tomb.

That is the reason that Jesus was raised early on the morning of the third day, so that His flesh might not see corruption. There may be some kind of symbolic tie-in between this peace offering and the fact that the flesh could not be consumed on the third day because then it begins to see corruption.

**The Peace Offering of Free-Will**

The third and final type of peace offering was the free will offering. It was called *nidebah* in the Hebrew tongue. It seems to have been a sacrifice that was offered spontaneously; it too could be eaten on the second day.

**The Stages of the Ritual**

As we begin the study of the ceremonies governing the peace offering, let us notice the rituals. The early stages of this sacrifice conformed to the pattern of the burnt offering:

presentation, the laying on of hands, the killing of the animal and the sprinkling of the blood. However, from that moment forward there was a distinction and separation in the rituals of the sacrifice. So let us go back through the stages of this ceremony because there are some changes even in the intent of each of the stages.

### **Stage One: The Presentation**

The first stage is that of the presentation. In the burnt offering the purpose of the presentation was for the Hebrew to give himself in consecration to God. However, in this sacrifice the presentation stage has its distinctive meaning. It expresses the desire to enjoy friendly relations with God and to participate in a banquet devoted to festive celebration with God. It has the purpose of intensifying the fellowship. Therefore, in the stage of presentation the reason the Hebrew had come to the altar with his substitute animal was different from the reason that led him there to offer the burnt offering. Here he was seeking deeper fellowship. He wanted to intensify the sense of spiritual union that existed between himself and God. So, though the first stage was the same as in the burnt offering, the purpose was different.

### **Stage Two: Laying On of Hands**

In the second stage of the peace offering sacrifice, the worshiper laid his hand on the head of his victim. He symbolically “leaned or relied” upon his sacrificial victim. The Hebrew word for laying on the hand is *samak*, and it literally means to depend totally upon this animal to fulfill its stand-in roll. There was the element of atonement in this sacrifice, but as was characteristic of the burnt offering, atonement received marginal consideration. The reason for marginal atonement derived from the fact that the central purpose of the peace offering was the intensification and the renewal of fellowship

between the worshiper and God. So, having laid his hand upon the sacrifice, the worshiper symbolically transferred his unspecified sins to the account of his substitute sacrifice.

### **Stage Three: Killing the Victim**

Stage three of the ceremony of the peace offering was the killing of the victim. The purposes of this were the same as explained in the burnt offering. Having laid his hand on the head of his victim, the worshiper had symbolically transferred his sin to his victim. The sins committed were not specified. In the sin and trespass offerings the Hebrew had to declare the specific wrong and then make atonement for it. However, in this sacrifice there were sins that were present, but they were unspecified. The worshiper had to slay his own sacrifice and thus agree with heaven's judgment against his sin. He agreed that he was to personally carry out the penalty of the law against his iniquity. For the worshiper, such requirement must have been highly educational. How could he witness the death throes of his animal without feeling the severe penalty of God's law against sin?

### **Stage Four: Sprinkling Blood on Base of Altar by the Priest**

The priest would then apply the blood on the altar. He would sprinkle it. The Hebrew word *zaraq* literally means "to splash" or "to splatter." The blood was applied to the base of the altar of burnt offerings in marginal atonement for the sins that had been committed. As was characteristic of all animal sacrifices, the worshiper had to rely on the priest to accomplish the functions essential for his forgiveness.

### **Stage Five: Removal of All the Fat**

Stage five of the ceremony of the peace offering was the

first stage of the sacrifice that differed from that of the burnt offering. In this sacrifice there was the removal of all of the fat that was a part of the animal's body. Scrupulous dedication was demanded in the removal of all the fat. Leviticus 3:9-10 insists upon removal of the animal's "*... fat, the entire fat tail cut off close to the backbone, all the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them . . .*"

The fat of the peace offering was called "the bread of God" or "the food of God." Such terminology clearly indicates that not only was the worshiper involved in the festive banquet but that God Himself would receive His "food" from this sacrifice. God shared in the banquet. In Leviticus 3:11,16 and 21:6,8 and 17 the fat is referred to either as the bread of God or the food of God. Therefore this was seen as a banquet between God and the worshiper. It was a beautiful manifestation of the mutual fellowship that had been restored and was being enjoyed both by God and the worshiper. The Father delighted when His wandering citizens of the kingdom of Israel returned in repentance to restoration. The worshiper's part of the banquet was celebrated in the final stage of the ritual. God's part is seen in this stage when the fat was "incensed" on the altar of burnt offerings to Him. Leviticus 3:17 says: "*This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live: You must not eat any fat or any blood.*" This is a perpetual ordinance prohibiting the children of Israel from eating any fat because the fat belonged to God as His "bread." The blood was presented upon the altar to make atonement.

We have noticed many symbols in the study of the burnt offering, grain offering and now the peace offering. There was incense symbolizing prayer, oil symbolizing consecration, salt symbolizing covenant, and yeast and honey symbolizing corruption and fermentation. In this way fat also had symbolic meanings. In the Scriptures, fat always stood for the richest and best part of the animal.

God always demanded that the best part be given to Him; the first-fruits were always the better fruits. In Genesis 45:18

God told the children of Israel that they would eat of the fatness of the land. In interpreting these words, the fat indicated the abundance of the land. In Deuteronomy 32:15 God was giving warning to the children of Israel. He did not want them to go into the land of Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey, and find all they needed to sustain them, and thus forget the God that begat them. Therefore, fat stands for that which is the richest and the best.

In Psalm 36:8 the statement is made that there will be the feast of abundance. The Hebrew says that this feast is “of the fat,” that is, it is enjoyed in the house of God. In other words, the simple statement is that Israel could enjoy the fatness of God’s house. In Isaiah 25:6 is found a beautiful prophecy about the coming kingdom of the Messiah, and Isaiah tells us that in those days the Lord of heaven will prepare a feast of rich food. That word “rich” is “fat” in Hebrew. That banquet is for all people of all the nations on earth. This prophecy indicates the universal intent of God to bring everybody into the kingdom of Christ and to share with them the feast of heavenly blessings. When the text speaks of “. . . *a feast of rich food . . .*” the prophet is using physical figures to represent spiritual realities.

Even the Apostle Paul used that same concept in Romans 11:17 when he mentioned the fact that salvation is come from the Jews and that the Gentiles “. . . now share in the nourishing sap (the word is “fat” in Greek) *from the olive root, . . .*” In Paul’s analogy the “*olive root*” is the Jewish nation. Jesus had told the woman at the well that salvation comes through the Jews, from whom the Messiah was born. In fact, Jesus descended from God’s original Jewish stock in Abraham. The salvation Jesus brought through His Jewish roots brought blessings to both Jews and Gentiles.

The fat is a symbol of all of the riches and the best. Having been removed from the sacrifice, it was placed on the altar and then incensed and fumed to God as a “sweet savor.” No other individual had the privilege of participating in any portion of the fat of the sacrifice. There is a tragic story related in 1

Samuel 2:15ff. Eli was the great high priest over the nation of Israel. He was a good high priest but a very poor father. His sons were guilty of committing some of the most grievous sins on the doorsteps of the Tabernacle. Eli knew of their sin, but he did not reprove them. Therefore, God removed the priesthood from him and his family. It is in that context that we learn one of the grievous sins of Eli's sons.

The sin was this: after the fat was removed from the peace offerings, it was the practice of the high priest to send his servants to get some of the meat that was the privilege of the high priest to receive for his own food. But these sons wanted their portion of the meat before the fat was removed. In other words, they wanted God's part, and that was an abomination in the sight of God. It was a grievous sin. Any time man is negligent in giving God His rightful tribute, honor, worship or devotion, he is robbing God of that which creation gives Him the right to expect. (See Malachi 3:8.)

## **Stage Six: The Animal Is Divided for the Participants**

In stage six, the animal was divided into the portions that would be used by the participants in this sacrifice. The first part of the animal to be removed was the breast. Interestingly enough, it was called the "wave breast." In Leviticus 7:31 and 34-36 an explanation is given to the high priest. The reason it was called a "wave breast" was because the worshiper held the shoulder of the animal in his hands. The officiating priest would place his hands on the sacrificial breast and the two would wave it toward the altar and then would bring it back. The waving seems to have been done two or three times. This was done to signify to both worshiper and priest that the breast really belonged to the altar—literally, to God. Having acknowledged that God was the donor of the "food" for the priest, he would take his breast home to consume it.

From such action it was understood that God was making provision for His priest. In Deuteronomy 18:2 we read that the

Levites received no inheritance of land in the country of Israel. They lived on the offerings made to the Lord by fire, for this was their inheritance. The Lord was their inheritance as He promised them. Paul used this example in 1 Corinthians 9:13 to establish his right of support from those who served the Lord. He said,

*“Don’t you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar?”*

After the “wave breast,” they removed the right thigh from the sacrificial animal. It was called the “heave thigh.” The worshiper again held the thigh, and the priest put his hands on top and together they lifted it up toward heaven and brought it back down, lifted it to heaven and back down. After the third time it was given to the officiating priest, who would take it home as his share in the offering. It was lifted to heaven in indication that the animal belonged to God. This indicated that it was God who offered this gift to the priest out of His providence. It is clear that such “waving” of the breast and “heaving” of the thigh signaled to all participants that God is the ultimate Provider for those who serve Him according to His law.

### **Stage Seven:      The Disposal of the Rest of the Body**

In the final stage, the rest of the body of the peace offering animal was given by God to the worshiper. The body was to be consumed in festive celebration by the worshiper and his immediate family—his wife, children, servants, any widow who happened to be in his home, any orphans who were there, and the Levite who was within his gate. Deuteronomy 12:18 and 16:11 indicate to us that this was a family affair.

When an individual sins so as to lose his fellowship with God, it creates alienation not only between him and God, but

also within the family. Once he has repented and has come home, the whole family can enjoy the fellowship. Deuteronomy 12:7 insists that this sacrifice be eaten in the presence of the Lord. The man and his family were to eat it in the courtyard of the Tabernacle, and they were to rejoice as they feasted. The courtyard indicates that this banquet was to be enjoyed in the house of God. In verse 17 he said, "*You must not eat in your own towns . . . ,*" for that would imply that the worshiper was the host and God the guest. Rather, this was a feast that God would host in His house, and the Hebrew participants were all God's guests.

## **Important Lessons From the Peace Offering**

There are some salient lessons that we can learn from the peace offering. The first lesson is that peace has many directions to it—peace with God, with the family, with the commonwealth of Israel and certainly peace within a man himself. Another lesson is drawn from the very location of the banquet—the courtyard of the Tabernacle. It was "before God," that is, in His presence. When one is invited to the banquet table of the king, then he is seen as being in good standing with the king. He and the king have mutually rewarding, peaceful relationship. Again, this was a fellowship that was enjoyed by the entire family as they collectively feasted before God.

Deuteronomy 12:18 says,

*" . . . you are to rejoice before the LORD your God in everything you put your hand to."* In Psalm 23:5 David said, "*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.*"

God is the host, and the worshiper is the guest. God wanted this sacrifice to be enjoyed in His house. That was where fellowship was granted. That was where meaningful

relationship between God and man was enjoyed.

Prophetically, the peace offering indicates to us many things about Jesus Christ Himself, and we will be looking into that in the next chapter.

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# THE PEACE OFFERING

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## (APPLICATION)

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### Leviticus 3

The purpose of chapter seven is to give the conclusion, explanation and application of the peace offering sacrifice. This chapter will give special attention to the many ways in which Christ brings fulfillment to that Old Testament prototype sacrifice. There are many spiritual realities that are easily associated with the fulfillment of the sacrifice in Christ. Then at the end of this chapter we will present an overview of the message that Jesus gave in John 6 about the “true bread of life” that came down from heaven.

### Old Testament Prophecies of Christ’s Universal Peace

#### A Reign of Peace

Let us point to the passages of scripture that prophetically indicate that the coming Messiah will be the source of peace to the entire human family. The first passage of scripture is Isaiah 9:6 and 7. The prophet said,

*“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom,*

*establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.”*

### **The Source of Peace**

Quite evidently, Christ was going to inaugurate a reign of peace that would endure throughout the ages. The second passage of scripture that speaks of Christ as the source of peace is Isaiah 53:5. This is the beginning of a series of statements about the Lamb of God who would be led to the slaughter. The writer tells us prophetically that God was going to lay upon Him the iniquity of us all, and the chastisement—that means the punishment—the hurt, the pain, the death by which you and I have peace with God was laid upon Him.

### **The Branch/Messiah**

The third passage of scripture is found in Zechariah 6:12-13:

*“Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD. It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony (“peace” in original Hebrew) between the two.”*

In prophecy the coming Messiah was frequently called “the branch.” In Isaiah 4:2 He was called “*the Branch of the LORD*” which indicates His divine nature. In Isaiah 11:1 He was called “the branch of Jesse,” the father of David. That indicates His human nature. In the Zechariah passage this one who is called “*the Branch*” will build the temple, the future kingdom of Christ. He will reign as King while He serves as Priest on His throne. But there will be “*harmony*” or peace between the two positions of King and Priest.

Quite evidently, the king is the one who establishes the law, and it is he who insists upon the punishment of the law breaker. Therefore, the righteousness and the justice with which He rules is underscored by the fact of His Kingship. On the other hand, however, from the same throne He functions also as a Priest. The priest is the one who is always intervening on behalf of those who are guilty of violating the laws of the king and He, as the Priest, will insist upon mercy, forgiveness and grace.

### **The Offices of King and Priest Brought Together in Christ**

Though these two offices of priest and king seem to be opposites of one another, Christ was able to bring them together in perfect peace. In Zechariah 9:9-10 we read:

*“Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey . . . He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.”*

These are just a few passages in the Old Testament that indicate to us that Christ was to be the source of universal peace.

### **Christ Prepares the Feast**

In the peace offering the culminating stage of the sacrifice was the banquet hosted by God in the courtyard of the Tabernacle. This indicated the restoration of peaceful relationships and the inauguration of perfect fellowship between Himself and His people. Therefore, it is quite clear that this was a physical example of some of the New Testament realities found in the teachings of Jesus. The Old Testament peace offering was the shadow, and the Messiah was the reality

foreshadowed by it.

### **The Prodigal Son Hosted By Father**

In Luke 15 there is one of the most touching examples of the banquet where God celebrates the restoration of His wandering, sinning child, and it is the story of the prodigal son. The son had departed from home and had lost fellowship with the father. He wasted his inheritance; he was a lost man. Such was the judgment of the father: My son was dead and is alive. He was lost and is found. But the prodigal came to himself and became aware of the misery of his life with the pigs—trying to feed himself with their food. He admitted to himself how foolish his plight was. He promised himself that he would rise and go to his father. He would confess his sin against him and against heaven’s laws.

The father saw him from a distance, ran to him, smothered him with kisses and then called the servants to place a ring on his finger (restoration to family privilege), to put a robe on his back (to cover the nakedness of his spiritual condition), and then to put shoes on his feet—those are house shoes, for slaves did not wear shoes. Then the father said, “Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate.” This parable illustrates the pleasure the Father has in the restoration of fellowship with His children. In this context, Jesus said three times that there is rejoicing among the angels in heaven over one sinner who repents. Such concepts explain why the Hebrew peace offering was celebrated with God’s spiritual participation in the courtyard of the Tabernacle, which is God’s house!

### **The Marriage Feast of the King’s Son**

The next passage suggestive of a festive banquet hosted by God for all who come to His “house” (the church) is found in Matthew 22:1-14. This is the parable of the marriage feast for the son of the king. He sent out his servants to invite everyone to come, but they ignored the invitation. He told them in verse

four, “*My oxen and my fatted calf have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.*” God is preparing a spiritual feast for those who are invited to His banquet table of spiritual good. God wants the “wedding hall” to be filled with guests (verse 10).

### The Great Supper

A parable of very similar nature is found in Luke 14:15-24. It is the parable of the great supper that was provided by the king. He invited a number of people, and they all with one consent began to make excuses. The feast had been prepared in the kingdom of Christ. The spiritual banquet has been prepared for all who are in covenant relationship with God. Again, the King’s desire is to have His banquet hall filled with guests (verse 23). Anyone who slights the invitation of the Lord will be denied access to the feast God provides (verse 24).

### Eat and Drink at the Lord’s Table in the Lord’s Kingdom

There is another passage of scripture that deserves attention, from Luke 22:24-30. Jesus had instituted the Lord’s Supper, and on the way from the upper room to the Garden of Gethsemane the apostles began to discuss the question of who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Obviously they were seeking positions of prominence. Jesus overheard their conversation, and He told them in verse 27 that among the Gentiles their kings rule over them and those who do good to them are called benefactors. “*But you are not to be like that*” (Luke 22:26a). The kingdom of heaven is not built on positions of importance. Jesus asked:

*“For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on*

*me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom . . .” (verses 27-30).*

This is not the Lord’s supper! It is the banquet of every spiritual blessing that is presented under the figure of a fellowship banquet with God. Jesus allowed the apostles to sit at the table as the honored guests while He served them and supplied the needs of their souls. This is a beautiful expression of the festive banquet that God prepared for His people somewhat in likeness to the peace offering that was found in the Old Testament story of Leviticus 3.

In Luke 12:37 Jesus gives us an amazing passage of scripture. He says,

*“It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them.”*

In all these messages Jesus gave, He was describing with physical figures the spiritual blessings that He provides for kingdom people. Once again, none of these figures relate to the Lord’s Table instituted by Christ in the context of the Passover Feast. These are just some of the passages of scripture from the gospel that indicate that Christ is the fulfillment of the banquet typology or the shadow system of the peace offering.

Hebrews 13:10 presents another amazing passage of scripture in this same vein. The writer said, “*We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat.*” This verse tells us that we do have an altar (the cross) and that we Christians have the exclusive right to “eat” of its spiritual blessings. Those who are still tied to the now abrogated Hebrew system have no right to participate in the spiritual “food” that derives from the sacrifice of Christ. Those who remain with the Levitical shadow after the reality has come are denied access to God’s banquet table in Christ. That

old system has been removed; its sacrifices are no longer accepted by God, and its Law has been taken away, “. . . *nailing it to the cross*” (Colossians 2:14). In Colossians 2:16-17 Paul discusses the Jewish food and drink restrictions, festivals, new moons and Sabbath days saying, “*These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ*” (verse 17).

The writer to the Hebrews tells us that those who remain in Judaism and thus reject Jesus Christ have no right to eat at our altar. Our Christian altar, quite evidently, is Calvary. Only Christians have the privilege of participating in all of the benefits that come from Calvary—spiritual benefits that are described under the figure of a banquet of God-provided foods of spiritual good.

In Revelation 19:9 John said, “*Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb.*” The lamb, quite evidently, is Jesus, and the bride of Jesus is the church, “*Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb*” (Revelation 21:9b). The wedding supper is the festive banquet that God has prepared in His house for His people.

## **The Festive Celebration in the Courtyard of the Tabernacle**

### **Hosted by God to Celebrate Restoration and Fellowship**

The body of the sacrificial peace offering was the food that was provided in the courtyard of the Tabernacle given by God to the worshiper and his family to create the atmosphere of festive celebration. The same body that was offered in festive celebration was the body that had shed its blood in atonement for the worshiper. Atonement restores fellowship, and fellowship restores the celebration of the relationship with God.

Those who are not a part of the family of God have no privilege of participating in this banquet of spiritual good. In 1

John 1:6 John said, “*If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in darkness* (that is, while we practice sin), *we lie and do not live by the truth.*” That says that there is no fellowship; there is no festive banquet. In verse 7 John said,

*“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”*

That means that we have a right to the cleansing of our sins. That is one of the special foods that is prepared on the banquet table by Jesus Christ.

### **The Sacrificial Body Is Called “Bread of God” or “Food of God”**

The body of the peace offering sacrifice is called “the bread of God” or “the food of God” (Leviticus 21:17). Such language assures us that this is not only a banquet that is enjoyed by the worshiper but also by the Father Himself. This bread of God is actually the fat of the peace offering. It ascends to the Father from the altar of incense as a sweet savor. It smells good to the Father, and it is a kind of a “food” that He enjoys. Just as the father and the prodigal son enjoyed that feast of mutual fellowship one with another, so is the peace offering of Leviticus. However, that is just a shadow of the real peaceful celebration that Christ brings to the Father and His children in New Testament realities.

Revelation 3:20 is the famous passage of scripture where Jesus said,

*“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”*

That means that Christians enjoy the mutually rewarding privilege of sharing in the spiritual benefits that come from the

cross of Calvary—rewarding to Christians and to God. These are some of the specific passages of scripture in the New Testament that suggest the peace offering typology fulfilled by Christ.

## Christ Is Our Peace

### The Peace From/Of Christ

There is a list of verses that confirm Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies that spoke about Jesus as the source of our peace. In John 14:27 Jesus said, “*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*”

### In Christ We Have Peace

In John 16:33 he had said, “*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*” Jesus wants His disciples to know that in Him they have peace. In the world they will have tribulation. That means there will be physical disturbances of all kinds out in the world. But in Christ Jesus spiritually and eternally there is peace because He is the one who brings it.

### We Stand in a Peaceful Relationship With God

In Romans 5:1-3 the apostle Paul tells us that we have been justified, for the atoning blood of Jesus Christ has removed our sin. Since we have been justified, “*. . . we have peace with God . . .*” (5:1). It is through our faith in Christ Jesus that we have access into this peace “*. . . in which we now stand*” (5:2). There are two perfect tense verbs contained in these verses. A perfect tense verb in the Greek defines past completed action with present continuing results. Therefore, when Paul says that we have access into peace, such peace is a continuing privilege for God’s people. Then he said that we

“*stand*” in this peace—another perfect tense verb—indicating that peace had its beginning when we entered into relationship with Christ, and that peace continues as long as we are in Him.

### **Christ Is Our Peace**

In Ephesians 2:11-17 Paul assures us that we have Christ as our peace. He is our peace who made peace. He reconciled Jew and Gentile together in one body, the church, by destroying the hostility between them. That was done by eliminating the Law of Moses which had created a barrier between those two ethnic groups. Initially, Christ brought about peace between God and the Jew—who is no longer a Jew, but now a Christian. Since they are both Christians, He made peace between Jew and Gentile. *“He came and preached peace to you who were far away (the Gentiles) and peace to those who were near (the Jews)”* (Ephesians 2:17). He reconciled them both in one body through the cross “... *thus making peace*, . . .” (Ephesians 2:15).

There is one final passage of scripture that deserves our attention: Colossians 3:15, *“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.”* Paul insists that Christ is the only source of all peace among ethnic groups and between them and God. Only those in Christ Jesus have such dual relationships of peace, both vertically with God and horizontally with fellow Christians of all nationalities.

### **The Bread of Life**

#### **Jesus Has Just Fed the 5,000 Plus**

In John 6:30ff notice the amazing parallel between it and the language that Jesus used when He talked about the *“bread from heaven.”* Remember the language of Leviticus 3 and 21 in which the body of the peace offering was called the “food of God.” It is clear that Jesus is building on the typology of Leviticus. John 6 and Leviticus 3 and 21 stand as substance

versus the shadow. Jesus in this context had just completed the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes which had fed more than 5,000 people. They took up twelve baskets full of food showing that there was no one who left His banquet table still hungry. When the Jews saw that He was able to multiply the loaves and the fishes, they came to take Him by force and make Him their king (verse 15). Jesus knew their intent. They wanted the kind of king who could bring them physical food for the physical body. But Jesus' mission was not physical in nature. He had indicated that His mission was to give spiritual food that brings peace to the soul.

Therefore when Jesus saw that their purpose was to force Him to be their king who could provide only the physical benefits of the physical body, He withdrew into the mountains and spent the night in prayer. That was the night that the apostles got in the boat and started back across the Sea of Galilee toward the city of Tiberias close to Capernaum. Jesus came walking on the sea. He calmed the storm. The next morning when the people who were on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee saw that Jesus was no longer there, they got in some boats and crossed the sea looking for Him.

*“When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, ‘Rabbi, when did you get here?’”* (John 6:25). Rabbi means “Oh great teacher” in the Hebrew tongue. It was quite evident to Jesus and to anyone who would read this passage of scripture, however, that they were not interested in His teaching. They were only interested in His loaves and fishes. Jesus knew that, so He told them in verse 26, *“I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs . . .”* The miracle should have convinced them that Jesus was a Prophet sent from God with a message. They should have been more interested in the message than in the miracle of loaves and fishes.

Jesus knew they were not interested in the message, and He so accused them: *“I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate*

*the loaves and had your fill”* (John 6:26). They were hungry again and had returned for another feeding! They were working feverishly to make Him their king. Jesus challenged them: “*Do not work for the food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you*” (verse 27). Jesus is that food! They asked Him: “*What must we do to do the works God requires?*” (verse 28). His answer was simple but imperative: “*The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent*” (verse 29). In other words, “You have to believe in Me, not simply believe in My miracles.” It is only through faith in Christ that any man can have the true “*bread of life*.” So they asked: “*What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you?*” (verse 30) Was the sign of the loaves and the fishes the day before not adequate to convince them that Jesus had a message from God? “*What will you do?*” (verse 30) they asked.

They began to compare Jesus with Moses. They claimed that Moses fed the people of Israel manna when they were in the desert. They seemed to be challenging Jesus: “Are you able to do better than Moses? Can you provide loaves and fishes for us on a daily basis?” They even quoted the Scriptures: “... as it is written: ‘*He gave them bread from heaven to eat*’” (verse 31). Jesus said that there was a great difference between the physical manna that was given in the desert and the “*bread from heaven*” that Jesus came to provide. The “*bread*” of which Jesus spoke was fellowship with God, a banquet which God provides through Jesus.

“*I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven*” (verse 32). Manna was “shadow” bread; Christ is the “true” or “reality” bread! That only comes from heaven itself. Jesus is the true bread, and only God can give it.

To insist on the reality of His symbolic language, Jesus said: “*I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty*” (verse 35). Again, it is through “*belief*” in Jesus that one may eat of

the “*bread of life*.” The Jews were still insisting on the physical bread: “*Sir . . . from now on give us this bread*” (verse 34). They were still on the physical bread level. Jesus wanted them to understand that He is the One who can satisfy all the craving, the yearning and the hunger of the soul of a man. That is the purpose of His mission, to bring the food of redemption that produces fellowship with God. Peace is the end product of salvation, and only Jesus can give it. In verse 38 Jesus said:

*“For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.”*

The Jews began to complain because Jesus said, “*I am the bread that came down from heaven*” (John 6:41). They protested: “*Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?*” (verse 42). In John 6:48 and 49 Jesus reproved them saying: “*I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died.*” Perhaps many of them died with their stomachs full of manna. However, Jesus was not talking about that kind of food. He was talking about a “*bread*” that if a man eats “. . . *he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world*” (verse 51). He was not talking about physical food. “*This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*” Jesus gave that flesh, and He shed that blood on the cross of Calvary. Thus Jesus insists that any man who enjoys eternal life must assimilate by faith His sacrificial death on their behalf.

John 6 does not tie in to the Lord’s Supper. It is the Passover that builds the typology of the Lord’s Supper; see Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-26 and especially Luke 22:14-23. In John 6 Jesus is talking about the cross of Calvary where He gave His flesh in sacrifice and where He shed His blood. He

did neither in the upper room where He instituted the Lord's Supper to memorialize His crucifixion on Calvary. He did not shed His blood in the upper room. He did not give His flesh in the upper room. He gave His flesh on the cross of Calvary, and therefore Jesus said, “*... unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you*” (John 6:53). He insisted that they accept His sacrifice as the source of their fellowship with God. They were to accept Calvary. We all must agree with God's judgment against out sin as it was borne by Christ on the cross.

It is not only the cross of Calvary that gives peace and fellowship with God, but it is also the cross of Calvary that maintains it. One must “*... eat the flesh ... and drink his blood ...*” (verse 53) to receive spiritual life, and he must keep eating “*the flesh*” and keep drinking “*his blood*” to continue in that life. The verb tenses of verses 53-59 insist on the continued assimilation of the grace of Calvary to get and maintain spiritual union with the Father. It is essential that the Jews understand the figures that Jesus is employing. His sacrificial death is the only true (not shadow) atonement for sin. Therefore He added:

*“I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains*

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# THE SIN OFFERING

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**Leviticus 4:1-35, 5:1-13, 6:24-30**  
**Numbers 15:21-22**

Chapter eight presents the study of the sin offering and the specific category to which it belongs. A different ritual governed this sacrifice. Certainly there will be placed in evidence the logical applications directly made to Jesus Christ. There are significant changes in the ceremony and even in the nature of the sacrifice of the sin offering. Though there are certain qualities or proceedings that are similar to the burnt offering and the peace offering, there are, nevertheless, significant differences to set this sacrifice apart from all the rest.

Having studied in the previous chapters the three “sweet savor” categories of sacrifices—the burnt, the grain and the peace offerings—we now enter into a study of the “most holy” series of sacrifices. These are the sin, trespass and Day of Atonement offerings. Though they are not “sweet savor,” they are not to be despised, for they are “most holy.”

The passages of scripture that explain the sin offering are found in Leviticus 4:1-5:13. Leviticus 6:24-30 and Numbers 15:21-22 are the basic passages of scripture that explain the nature of this atonement sacrifice.

## **The Historical Background of the Sin Offering**

### **Sin Offering – *Hattath* in Hebrew**

The name of the sin offering in Hebrew is *hattath*. This

sacrifice was generally required when there had been a violation of one of the first five of the Ten Commandments of the Law of Moses. In other words, sin violates the nature and divine rights of God. This is not a fragrant odor sacrifice. It does not belong to the sweet savor category because it speaks of sin. It speaks of disobedience of the laws that defend the nature and dignity of God. Therefore, it is not to be considered a sweet savor sacrifice, though there are isolated elements in the sacrifice that are called “sweet savor.”

This sacrifice assumed that the fellowship between God and the individual has been broken because of the sin committed. That person was no longer in covenant relationship with God or even with the nation of Israel. It was a sacrifice of atonement that must be made before the restoration to fellowship with God could be obtained. It must be understood that in both the Old and New Testaments, sin is sin whether it is committed wittingly—deliberately or willingly—or unwittingly in ignorance of the law. Whether the sin involves voluntary disobedience of known law or involuntary wrong, atonement must be made before covenant relations can be restored.

Whether in the Old or New Testament teaching on the subject, sin is always seen on the part of a man as a chosen course. Whether committed in ignorance of the Law or of willful disobedience of known Law, man was held accountable for his actions. An individual could not claim ignorance of the Law and then pretend exemption from its penalties and demands. One could conceivably refuse to study the Law of God, and then assume that he is not accountable because of his ignorance. That would be a voluntary decision to remain untaught. Therefore, in the final analysis, such a course would result in his refusal to be governed by God’s revealed will in His Law. Therefore, even ignorance of the Law is a chosen course. This is where the man who is an agnostic makes his fallacious assumptions. He assumes that if he doesn’t know about God then he can escape any judgment by God. He simply

chooses to remain untaught about God and His moral and religious government. His choice is still his choice, but it is evil in the sight of God.

One thing is evident, and that is that sin is not a result of a built-in tendency on the part of man, constructed in him at creation. It is a chosen course. Otherwise, how would you explain the innocence of Jesus? He was innocent by choice just as surely as we are guilty by choice. Sin is not simply a defect in human nature, nor a programmed defect given in creation. There was no built-in ingredient at creation that made us inevitably sinful. That would make God responsible for our wrong doing.

It is also evident that sin is not some kind of an evil inheritance that we receive from Adam. Each individual is innocent until he personally violates the Law of God. True, sin can be learned from others, but even then it is the result of one's personal decision. Paul said: "*Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character'*" (1 Corinthians 15:33). Peter discusses the "*... empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers ...*" (1 Peter 1:18). Such statements warn us to be cautious in the selection of our friends. The Bible knows nothing of inherited guilt. For confirmation, read Ezekiel 18:1-32. Particularly poignant are the words of verse 30: "*Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign LORD.*" The truth is underscored in all Old and New Testament scriptures that deal with the subject.

Under the Law of Moses there were certain sins that were called the "high-handed" sins. A high-handed sin is a belligerent rejection of God's government. The high-handed sinner appears to double up his fist and shake it in the face of God and to lift it up toward heaven and say, "I don't care what your Law says; I am going to do what I want to do." Under the Law of Moses there was no sacrifice of atonement for that kind of a sin. Deuteronomy 13:6-9 and 17:2-3 and Leviticus 24:14 describe sins committed with a haughty spirit. Such a person

was to be taken out of the gates of the city and stoned to death, thus losing fellowship with Israel and most certainly his fellowship with God. Even if the person were a close kin, or one's closest friend, Leviticus 24 says that the people were to show no pity, nor mercy. In that way, God instructed them to remove sin from the nation of Israel. Sin contaminates those who are around it. In Hebrews 10:28 the writer said, "*Anyone who rejected the law of Moses* (according to the Greek, considered it as nothing) *died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.*"

However, if sins were committed in ignorance, not with rashness, perhaps because of stupidity, weakness or waywardness, they could be covered by the sacrifice of atonement. Therefore, there was a difference between the sin of a high-handed attitude and those committed in ignorance.

## **Sin & Trespass Offerings Were New Legislation in Israel**

The sin offering and the trespass offering were new legislation for Israel. All other sacrifices—the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the peace offering—pre-existed the Law of Moses. There was, however, no sin or trespass offering offered during the patriarchal dispensation before the Law of Moses was given. There is no record of atonement sacrifices in the book of Genesis. Only mention is made of sacrifices by Job, just in case his sons had sinned (Job 1:5). But even in that case the sacrifice was a burnt offering.

There was no constituted order of priests back then who were expected to offer sacrifices. The patriarchs themselves functioned as priests for their extended families, as in the case of Job. There was no tabernacle and no altar where that kind of sacrifice could be offered, though we do read of Abel, Noah, Abraham and others building their altars and offering sacrifices. The absence of sin or trespass offerings during the pre-Mosaic age should not surprise us any more than the

observation that Christians do not offer such sacrifices today.

## Animal Sacrifices Did Not Cover Sin

### No Atoning Quality in Animal Blood

It is quite evident that animal sacrifices, even under the Law of Moses, did not remove the sin. Hebrews 10:4 and 10 tell us that it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin. Regardless, those sin and trespass offerings of the Law were for atonement purposes.

### Yet Sins Were Actually Forgiven

After the sacrifices of the sin and trespass offerings were made, it is recorded that the individual was actually forgiven. Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31, 35 and 5:10 clearly state: “*... and he will be forgiven.*” Evidently he was not forgiven by animal blood, but he could not be forgiven without it. This may appear to be a contradiction, but only apparently so. Hebrews 9:22 affirms that according to the Law, “*... without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*”

The Hebrew could not be forgiven without the sprinkling of the blood of his sacrificial substitute. It was his obedience to Divine command to offer the atoning sacrifice. Through that sacrifice was established the redemptive connection with the blood of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. God was able to forgive the Hebrew, not in virtue of animal blood, but in view of the future sacrifice of Calvary.

Romans 3:24-27 affirms that God “*... presented him as a sacrifice of atonement (“satisfaction” says the Greek) ... to demonstrate his justice ...*” in forgiving “*... sins committed beforehand ...*” The word “*beforehand*” relates to the sins committed under the Law. Hebrews 9:15 affirms the same thing: “*... now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*”

## **The Sinners Rank or Position Aggravated Atonement**

There are different levels of accountability. It is evident that the religious and political position of the sinner created a greater or lesser sense of guilt. It made an enormous difference, not only in the consequences of those sins, but also in the kind of animal that was offered, in the place the blood was applied and in the disposition of the body of the animal. There were four different levels of responsibility.

### **Levels or Grades of Responsibility for Sin**

When an individual who was in a high place of authority in the nation of Israel committed a sin, it had ramifications that filtered down to the entire nation. The high priest was the number one individual in responsibility because he was God's representative to Israel and Israel's representative to God. Therefore he occupied a position of extreme importance, and his sin could have had repercussions that could have involved the entire nation. He could have committed a sin in such a way as to bring guilt upon the entire nation. The sin of Aaron, as the high priest who let the children of Israel build a golden calf, is one such example. That was a case of the high priest leading the nation into idolatry. He was the teacher of Israel, and he could also cause the nation to stray from God in morals and in doctrine. Therefore, his sin carried more grievous consequences. He had been anointed before God as His special representative; he was called "*the anointed priest*" (Leviticus 4:3).

The second level of responsibility was the "*whole Israelite community*" (Leviticus 4:13). The high priest could lead the whole congregation into sin, but he would be the one most held accountable by God. In this second level the sin by the whole congregation could be committed against the protest of the high priest. The congregation could fall into idolatry. It was possible for the nation to apostatize from God.

The third level of responsibility was the civil “*leader*” (Leviticus 4:22). That could be a ruler, a judge, one of the princes of Israel, and in later years, even the king. These civil leaders carried strong influences upon the nation and their sins were more significant.

The fourth level of responsibility was for the common Jew who was called the commoner. He was the ordinary member of the Jewish community. Therefore, the position or the rank of the person aggravated the sin committed, intensified the guilt and increased the obligation for atonement.

### **“And Begin At My Sanctuary”**

Those four levels of responsibility began with the high priest. In Ezekiel 9 is presented clear evidence that God held the high priest responsible for the sins of the people. In that context God sent a man with a writer’s kit, or a writer’s ink horn. God commanded him to go throughout the city of Jerusalem and place a mark on the forehead of every individual in the city who moaned over the sins of the people. He then sent out the avengers with their swords under the instructions to destroy and slay every individual who did not have the mark on his forehead. Such unconcern over sin implied that the individuals who did not mourn over the sin must have agreed with the sin. They could have been involved in the commission of the sin. The avengers were commanded to slay without pity. God said, “*Begin at my sanctuary*” (Ezekiel 9:6). That was where sin was most grievous in the sight of God. James warns,

*“Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly”* (James 3:1). Paul encourages Timothy as well, “*Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers*” (1 Timothy 4:16).

God's ministers are required to live more righteously and circumspectly because their teachings influence others either positively or negatively. (See Matthew 15:14.)

### **Animals Demanded for Each Level of Responsibility**

The four levels of responsibility dictated the kind of animal that was to be used in the sacrifice. The first level was the high priest. His sacrifice had to be a bull. This was the most expensive and most highly appraised animal sacrificed in Israel. The implication was automatic. The more grievous the sin, the greater the guilt, and such demanded more rigid atonement processes. For the whole congregation the bull was also the animal that was required. The civil ruler's sacrifice had to be a male goat. For the common man the sacrifice had to be a female goat.

In case the common man did not have a female goat, he could provide a ewe lamb. Leviticus 5:7 tells us:

*"If he cannot afford a lamb, he is to bring two doves or two young pigeons . . ." Verse 11 adds: "If, however, he cannot afford two doves or two young pigeons, he is to bring as an offering for his sin a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering."*

Evidently, this was for an extremely poor individual. A tenth of an ephah was about three quarts of ground flour.

Hebrews 9:22 affirms that without the shedding of blood according to the Law of Moses, there was no remission of sin. Of course, there was no blood in the tenth of an ephah of flour, but it was accepted in lieu of, or in the place of, the regular sin offering where blood would be offered. The fact is that God would accept this poor man's sacrifice, and then the priest would proceed to offer the blood-shedding sacrifice that would make atonement for his sin (Leviticus 5:13). He would be forgiven. God made arrangements for the poor man. No man was excluded from salvation simply because he did not have

enough money to provide the animal that ordinarily was required. No poor man was going to be excluded from redemption because of his poverty. Since the last alternate sacrifice of the poor man was a tenth of an ephah of fine flour, caution was taken in Leviticus 5 to distinguish it from the regular first-fruit sacrifices. Three times it was stated, "*It is a sin offering.*"

### Sprinkling of Blood – Each Level of Responsibility

The sprinkling of the blood was different for the levels, at least for some of them. For the high priest the blood was to be sprinkled on the horns of the altar of incense in the Holy Place. That ritualistic distinction reappeared later in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:24). When the blood was taken into the Holy Place the body was burned outside the camp. If it was not taken into the Holy Place, then other disposition was made of the body. However, for the high priest the blood had to be sprinkled on the horns of the altar of sweet incense. That was the altar of prayer.

Those horns were the elevated part of the altar—the most God-ward pointing part of the altar of sweet incense. The Jews were to be impressed with the fact of the centrality of atonement in the sin offering. The place of sprinkling brought atonement to the forefront and imposed a greater sense of guilt. Thus the blood was brought closer and closer to the very residence of God. He symbolically resided behind that curtain of separation between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place in the Hebrew Tabernacle. They called the Most Holy Place the *Shikenah*, the place of divine presence.

Both for the High Priest and the whole congregation the blood was sprinkled on the horns of the altar of sweet incense. Atonement was central to both levels. It is evident that when the sin of the High Priest brought guilt on the whole nation or when the whole nation sinned, atonement had to assume a much more significant position in their theology and in their thinking.

For the ruler, the blood was sprinkled on the horns of the altar of burnt offerings in the courtyard of the tabernacle. Even the horns of that altar were pointing toward heaven, the real residence of God. The horns of both the altar of incense and of burnt offerings rose from each of the four corners of this sacrifice. It was not sprinkled on the horns of the altar, and the same was true for the commoner – he horns of the altar of burnt offerings in the courtyard.

### **Disposition of the Body of Sacrificial Animal**

The laws regulating the distribution of the sacrificial body also demonstrated the gravity of sin for the High Priest and for the whole community. The levels of responsibility were built into the arrangements laid down for the disposal of the bodies of the sacrificial animals. The writer of Hebrews also built strong typology from the Levitical laws—typology that related to Christ (Hebrews 13:11). Since the atoning blood of the two bulls sacrificed for the High Priest and for the community was taken into the Holy Place, typology demanded that the bodies be burned outside the camp. In fulfillment of that typology or of that symbolism, the Hebrew writer adds: “*And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood*” (Hebrews 13:12). He was crucified outside the city of Jerusalem, which was a sign of the rejection by the people who clamored for His crucifixion.

The body of the bull for both the priest and the whole congregation was burned outside the camp. It was not placed upon the altar of burnt offerings and fumed or incensed to God as a sweet savor. The fires of this sacrifice did not ascend to God. The fires that consumed these bulls were the fires of *seraph*, the fires of divine vengeance upon the sin that had been committed by such a great number of people in the nation of Israel. Therefore, that sin sacrifice had to be burned outside the camp.

For the civil ruler the sacrificial body was not burned outside the camp. The blood was not taken into the Holy Place.

The same was true for the common man. Neither was the body placed upon the altar to be incensed to God. The officiating priest was the one who received the body as his privileged portion out of the sacrifices to be offered to God. Leviticus 7:7 says the same law applied both to the sin and the trespass offerings. It belonged to the priest who made atonement for them. So the priest got this sacrificial body.

He didn't need to remove the wave breast or the elevated thigh because he got the whole animal. Leviticus 6:29 tells us that all of the male priests of the Levitical family had the privilege of partaking of the resulting sacrificial banquet that was hosted by God. Though the sacrifice was not sweet savor, it was nevertheless most holy. It belonged to the officiating priest, and it was to be eaten in the Holy Place, or "in a holy place" as the Hebrew text says. That was in the courtyard of the tent of meeting – Tabernacle (Leviticus 6:26).

The purpose for eating this sacrifice in the courtyard of the Tabernacle was basically the same as in the festive banquet of the peace offering. Only this time there was a difference in the participants of the banquet. It was there that God was seen as the Host of the sacrificial feast. God was once again conducting a festive banquet in celebration of the priest and of his participation in the restoration of the ruler and commoner back into fellowship with Himself.

Imagine the celebration that broke out in heaven when Jesus, the Great High Priest, had accomplished the redemptive process necessary for the salvation of the human family of ages past, present and future. When Jesus returned to heaven, as is evident from the study of Revelation, all heaven broke out into festive celebration. Revelation 5:9-10 says,

*"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and"*

*they will reign on the earth."*

Evidently God wanted to establish in typology, in shadow system, the glories of the future Messiah and His triumphant return to heaven after His atoning sacrifice had reconciled the family of men to God.

## **Ritual of the Sin Offering**

Let us look at the stages of the sacrifice. There was the stage of **presentation**. It is evident that the purpose was different in this stage of presentation from the presentation stage of the burnt and peace offerings. Here the community or the individual was seeking atonement.

The second stage was the **laying on of hands** symbolically transferring the guilt incurred by the sin. The third stage introduced the first deviation in the ritual. There had to be the **confession of the specific sin** that had been committed. Leviticus 4:4 tells us that this sacrifice was to be offered at the door of the tent of meeting. Then the specific sin had to be confessed. In the case of the whole congregation the sins were confessed by the elders of the various tribes.

Then there was the laying on of the hand. Again, in the event the whole congregation had committed a sin, the elders of each of the tribes would come and lay their hands on the sacrifice as representatives of the tribes. Then they would confess the specific sin that caused the apostasy of the nation from their fellowship with God. Then they would **slay the sacrifice** for basically the same purpose as God had intended in the other sacrifices—to concur with God's judgment against the sin. The **blood would be sprinkled** then by the priest in the way already explained, on the horns of the altar of incense or the altar of burnt offerings according to the four levels of responsibility. Then the **burning of the fat** was presented as a fragrant odor unto God, His sweet savor portion of this sacrifice.

Though this sacrifice belonged to the “most holy” category and did not belong to the fragrant odor class, the fat was nevertheless a “pleasing aroma” to God. The reason being that the sinners had obviously repented. The sin had been publicly confessed. The atoning sacrifice had been offered and accepted. Forgiveness had been granted. Then the fat went up before God as the only sweet savor portion of the sacrifice. He was pleased that fellowship had been restored between Himself and the sinner.

The next stage was the **disposition of the body**. The bodies of the sacrificial bulls for the high priest and the whole community were burned outside the camp. The bodies of the ruler’s sacrifice and that of the commoner’s were **consumed by the priestly clan** in the courtyard of the Tabernacle in festive celebration. That completes the stages of the ceremonial of the sin offering.

## Christ and the Sin Offering

### He Is the Anti-Typical Sin Offering

All of the Hebrew sacrifices contained evident predictions of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. There are several major passages of scripture in the New Testament that confirm the fact that Jesus is the one who fulfills all the sacrificial typology of the Old Testament.

### The Whole Book of Hebrews is Dedicated to This Concept

In 2 Corinthians 5:21 Paul said, “*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*” It was the sinless innocence of Christ that qualified Him to be our flawless sin sacrifice.

In Matthew 20:28 the apostles had been discussing who was the greatest in the kingdom. Jesus, of course, indicated in that context that the greatest is he who becomes the servant: “. . . just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to

*serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*" That word "many" stands for multitudes. In Matthew 26:28, in the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus said,

*"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."* In 1 Peter 1:18-19 the apostle said: ". . . you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect." In 1 Peter 2:24 we are told by the apostle that Jesus ". . . bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed."

In Romans 8:1-2 the apostle said,

*"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."*

He then explained that the Law once violated could not suspend its penalty of death. But God was able to transfer—not suspend—the penalty of our sin to Jesus on the basis of our obedient faith. So the apostle affirms that God did condemn our "sin in the flesh" in Jesus. That is the reason there ". . . is now no condemnation." It is simply because there was condemnation of our sin in Jesus. God had sent His own Son ". . . in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering" (Romans 8:3b).

It was in the sin offering of Christ that God condemned our sin. God treated Him as though He had committed our sins. Isaiah 53:5 says: ". . . the punishment that brought us peace was upon him . . ." He bore the consequences of all our wrong. Hebrews 9:14 assures us that Jesus was the Lamb without

blemish to cover the sins of the world.

The sacrifice of Christ covered all the sins of all men of all ages, not just the Jewish age or the Christian age. Matthew 1:21 explains why He was named Jesus. It is “*. . . because he will save his people from their sins.*” These included the redeemed of all ages. In John 1:29, in introducing Jesus to His disciples, John the Baptist said: “*Look, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*” It seems that the forerunner of Jesus rolled the innumerable sins of the whole world into one great package—called “the sin.” Then he affirmed that it was Jesus, as the God-provided substitute, who would bear that sin.

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# THE TRESPASS OR GUILT OFFERING

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**Leviticus 5:14-19, 6:1-7, 7:1-7 and Numbers 5:5-8**

In this chapter will be presented the trespass offering, more frequently called the guilt offering. This study will come from Leviticus 5:14-19, 6:1-7, 7:1-7 and Numbers 5:5-8. This study will explain the trespass offering, its peculiar ritual, and the obligations of strict justice it demanded. The whole sacrifice was built around the concept of strict moral justice. It was the “eye for an eye” kind of justice that was demanded under the Law. Then we will look at Christ as the fulfillment of the guilt offering.

The trespass offering generally was commanded when an individual violated one of the last five of the Ten Commandments—the commands of a social nature. The sin offering was required of those who violated the first five—the commands that related to God’s personal nature. Trespasses violate God’s government, as particularly related to commandments six through ten.

## **The Hebrew Background of the Trespass Offering**

### **The Name**

The name of the trespass offering was *asham*, which literally meant a guilt or a debt because all wrong doing creates moral responsibility and indebtedness. Those who trespassed

could not be right before God until the wrong had been made fully right in the eyes of the individual who had been trespassed against.

This offering assumed that the wrong that was done to a neighbor broke the fellowship with God and with the people of Israel. Leviticus 6:2 says: "*If anyone sins and is unfaithful to the Lord by deceiving his neighbor . . .*" This implies that all wrongs against the neighbor were also wrongs against God. This was true because the trespass was a violation of His government. Such actions resulted in the individual's loss of fellowship with God. He was spiritually a lost man. That means that he could not participate in any of the sacrifices or worship activities that took place at the Tabernacle. He was not a participant at worship; his worship was no longer acceptable to God. He was in a state of alienation. Restoration to fellowship on the part of that individual was required before he could be readmitted to religious functions and communion with God.

### **This Is a “Most Holy” Type Sacrifice**

This sacrifice also belongs to the category of the “most holy sacrifices.” There is nothing sweet savor about this sacrifice as was characteristic of the burnt and peace offerings. The trespass offering belongs to the same category as the sin offering; that is, most holy in nature. Right relationships between Hebrews had to exist before an individual could be restored to a right relationship with God.

### **This Is an “Individual” Sacrifice**

The trespass offering was offered only by individuals. There was no such thing as a collective trespass. It was not likely that every Hebrew would get up one morning and steal from every other Hebrew. Therefore, trespass offerings always involved the individual.

There were no graded levels of responsibility in the trespass offering. Whether civil ruler, priest, king, or common man, the demands of justice were equal. This was also

emphasized in the fact that there was only one animal that was allowed for the man who committed a trespass—a male sheep was always required. There were no provisions for alternate animals for the poor man. Every trespass demanded the ram and only the ram. Such invariable demands seem to imply that poverty was no excuse for stealing or any other kind of social abuse.

Trespasses always implied the violation or invasion of the rights and the properties of another person. As was mentioned, it was not possible for the whole nation to simultaneously commit a trespass. There were national sin offerings. The great Day of Atonement was offered annually on behalf of the entire nation—with individual participation. But the trespass offering was never offered congregationally or by the nation as a whole.

### **Respect for Rights and Properties of Others Was Demanded**

Under the Law, the rights and properties of other people had to be respected. Since God is one of those persons, then this law demanded that everyone respect His rights as well. It was normally considered that if an individual had trespassed or wronged God, he had to offer the sin offering. However, there is a trespass offering that is offered when an individual has wronged God. His first-fruit offerings, his claim on the tithe of everything must be respected, for after all, He is a person.

Maybe, for example, a man might eat some of the holy things that would belong to God or drink some of the drink offerings that had been given to Him (Leviticus 22:14-15). In Joshua 7:1 there is the example of this in the sin of Achan. He took a wedge of gold from the city of Ai—gold which God had already claimed for Himself. That was a case of stealing from God. In 2 Chronicles 28:22 the act of idolatry was a trespass against God; it deprived God of the worship He had a right to expect from His people.

In Malachi 3:8 God asks a very sobering question of the children of Israel: “*Will a man rob God?*” Quite evidently, the

answer is “yes,” because that is exactly what Israel was doing in the days of Malachi. How could they rob from God? They could do so by failing to give the full tenth that was required of the first-fruits and of the animals. They could also do so by offering in sacrifice to God animals that were defective, wounded or near death. God, in the context of Malachi, said: “*Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?*” (Malachi 1:8) Acceptable sacrifices to God are those that respect His nature, and they are given from hearts that are in tune with the dignity of His person.

### **Trespasses Involving Man to Man Violations**

Leviticus 6:1ff explains that trespasses always involve the violation of the rights of another person. There are presented a few examples of some of the ways in which an individual might violate his neighbor’s rights.

#### **Deceiving a Neighbor**

The first example is deceiving a neighbor about something entrusted to him. In other words, a man might have asked his neighbor to take care of some of his possessions or maybe loaned him some possession. The neighbor then abusively used this man’s property. Maybe livestock was entrusted to a neighbor, and the neighbor sold one of the cows or perhaps even ate the animal. That is abusing a neighbor’s property.

#### **Falsely Representing Some Product**

Another trespass might have been to unlawfully use possessions knowing that they belonged to someone else. Again, if something had been sold to someone and in the transaction the object sold was falsely represented, thus taking advantage of the other’s lack of knowledge—that was a trespass. It might have been a matter of a bargain or sale whereby another’s money or goods were abusively taken.

### **Stolen Properties**

Another example of trespassing against a neighbor was involved in stealing property. Any deed by which another individual's possessions were taken without payment or without consent was wrong. It was a trespass against a neighbor. Deuteronomy 27:17 says that removing one's neighbor's landmarks would be a trespass against him. The property line was marked by sign posts. The moving of those posts in such a way as to gain part of the neighbor's property was a subversive form of stealing.

Unpaid debt is another example of trespassing against your neighbor. When one owed his neighbor money and had promised to pay him by a certain date, failure to meet that date was wrong. If the man did not have the money, generally the last person he wanted to see was his neighbor, but the first person he ought to see was the neighbor. From the moment the money was due, if it was not paid, then he was holding his neighbor's money without his consent.

### **Cheating or Oppressing a Neighbor**

An individual who would cheat his neighbor or oppress his neighbor by withholding wages from him after he had labored all day was committing a transgression. Sometimes it was necessary for a man to use his wages earned that day to buy the food that his family would eat that night. Again, a falling short of an agreement that had been made was a trespass. These are just some of the ways in which it would have been possible, according to Leviticus 19:13ff, to take advantage of one's neighbor. Taking advantage of his extreme condition of need would be abusing him. It was wrong to force him to sell something cheaper than its actual worth.

### **Finding Lost Property and Not Returning It**

If an individual was to find lost property and then was to take possession of it, use it, abuse it, lie about it and swear falsely about it—it was an abuse of his neighbor. It was a

trespass. The owner was deprived abusively of his possession. The finder knew that it was not his. There was a general rule that if one found something and he did not know whose it was, he could be sure that it was not his. However, under the Law of Moses, a man had no right to claim it and use it as if it were his own. Deuteronomy 22:1-2 demanded that lost property must not be ignored. If one was to see his neighbor's cattle straying, he was required to pen it and hold it until the neighbor came to seek after it, and then it had to be restored. In the meantime the finder had to treat that animal as he would one of his own.

## **Restitution and Satisfaction**

### **Restitution of the Property Was the First Demand**

The central theme of the trespass offering was strict justice. Restitution and satisfaction were demanded as a part of the ritual that preceded the atonement exercise of the trespass offering. Restitution demanded that the property first be restored. Numbers 5:7 says that he was to make full restitution of the loss. If the owner was dead and a man had stolen from him and wanted to repent of the wrong that he did in the stealing, then he had to make restitution to God through the priest. He obviously could not make restitution to the dead man. So Numbers 5:8 says that he had to make restitution to God before the wrong was made right. Then after restitution, satisfaction was given

### **Satisfaction Involves an Added Amount**

Satisfaction came about by adding one fifth of the value of the animal taken, the property destroyed or abused. That was twenty percent, a double tithe, that was added to the price of restoration. So restitution demanded that the animal or the property be restored and then twenty percent be added to that as an addendum, an additional amount of money. Leviticus 5:15 tells us that the repayment and the twenty percent stood as a fine that was attached to the restitution. The double tithe had

to be given according to the shekel of the sanctuary. That means that the payment was to be given from full wright shekels like those used in the animal tax of the Hebrew people.

The twenty percent was considered as recompense to the one damaged for the loss. The owner had been deprived of his possession and the employment and use of it. The guilty had to recognize no profit from wrongdoing. Then he had to appease the owner for the loss that was done to him and satisfy the demands of justice in the eyes of the individual who had been offended.

### **No Exception for Ignorance**

Whether the sin was committed wittingly or unwittingly did not change the ordinance. It is difficult to believe that a man could steal his neighbor's property, sell it abusively, lie about it when the neighbor asked him if he had seen it, and then swear falsely to the fact: "No, I haven't seen it." It would be difficult to believe that he could do that without intent. Quite evidently, this was a malicious, voluntary sin that was committed. Deceiving one's neighbor was wrong, and so restitution and satisfaction had to be made.

### **Restitution and Satisfaction Do Not Atone**

When the restitution and satisfaction had been fully made the guilty man was right with his neighbor, but he was not yet right with God. Restitution restored the relationship on the social level, but only atonement could restore the relationship on a religious level. He then had to offer the sacrifice of the trespass offering. Only then, according to Leviticus 5:16 and 6:7, "... *he will be forgiven.*"

### **Basis for the Trespass Offering**

The trespass offering was based on the law of equal justice. It was the basis of the law that is called the "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"—rigid, strict justice.

### The Strict Justice of the Law

In Exodus 21:23 if there was a serious injury the Law demanded that the Hebrew take

*“... life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.”*

Leviticus 24:17-22 adds these: “... fracture for fracture (that is, broken bone) . . . ,” and what he did to the other must be done to him.

### Even in the Absence of Mercy

Deuteronomy 25:1-3 establishes punishment for the individual who had trespassed against his neighbor where no monetary value or property loss could be assessed. It is possible that the case dealt with slander, abusive language, or pettiness in dealings with one's neighbor. In such cases, the individuals had to go to court before the judge or the priest. They would hand down the decision. The decision may have demanded some physical punishment. It was not of a monetary nature because there was nothing to be restored.

The individual might have received the imposition of corporal punishment in the form of lashes (stripes) with a whip. The limit of the stripes that could be given was forty, and they had to be administered in the presence of the judge. They were not to exceed forty stripes. The Jews generally stopped at thirty nine lest they exceeded the limit that was imposed. Less could be given, but not more. The reason they were not to exceed the forty stripes was to avoid degrading their brother in their own eyes. The purpose was not to make him appear vile. The purpose was for correction, not for vengeance. If an individual were to keep beating the individual that did him wrong beyond the forty stripes, then he evidently was set on personal vengeance

**All Claims Must Be Well Proven**

Deuteronomy 19:15-19 insists that every man prove his claim against his neighbor.

*"One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If a malicious witness takes the stand to accuse a man of a crime, the two men involved in the dispute must stand in the presence of the LORD before the priests and the judges who are in office at the time. The judges must make a thorough investigation, and if the witness proves to be a liar, giving false testimony against his brother, then do to him as he intended to do to his brother. You must purge the evil from among you."*

**Further Litigation by the Priest**

Deuteronomy 17:8-13 addresses litigations that sometimes arose that were too difficult for brothers to settle. Some lawsuit or some assault was involved here. The men could not settle the matter, so they would go to the judge or the priest to resolve it. The judge or priest would inquire and then vindicate the righteous and condemn the wicked. Then he would hand down the decision that had to be followed. The party involved had to act according to the decision that he gave. He could not turn to the right hand nor to the left hand. He had to meet the spirit of the law. This context says that the man who showed contempt for the judge or for the priest was acting foolishly and presumptuously. He was to respect the office they represented. They were ministering there to God, and their decisions represented God's decision. The penalty was God's decision. If anyone rejected God's decision then that man was stoned to death! In that way, Israel purged itself of such presumptuous sin as rebellion against God's judgments. God's laws could not be ignored with impunity. All God's judgments were righteous

and had to be acted upon by all men who sought His favor.

## Ritual of the Trespass Offering

Let us look at the stages of the ceremony of the trespass offering. This is the only sacrifice in which the first stage is not that of the presentation. The demands of justice were to be met before the presentation of the animal for atonement was to be made. For a man could not be right before God when he was wrong before his neighbor.

### Stage One

The first stage demanded justice because justice precedes the acceptance of atonement. As long as justice had not been vindicated, there could be no atonement. In this way, the individual had to make restitution in full, according to Numbers 5:7. Then satisfaction was made by adding the twenty percent fine—the additional amount as a fine to give satisfaction to the person who was abused by the trespass.

### Stage Two

As in the sin offering, the second stage involved the confession of the specific trespass committed. It seems that the confession had to be publicly made. It is interesting to note that there was no laying on of the hand on the head of the victim in this sacrifice. The reason probably is attributed to the fact that the restitution and satisfaction had taken care of the major issues that were involved in the wrong done. Also, the open and public confession was an acknowledgment of the sin that had violated the neighbor's rights. It stood as evidence that he wanted to make all things right.

### Stage Three

In stage three, there was the slaying of the sacrifice, and

that was done as in the sin offering and all of the other blood-shedding sacrifices. As before, there was the manifest conviction on the part of the individual that he was in agreement with God's penal judgments against his trespass. In other words, he had to carry out the sacrificial slaying so that he could manifest in that way his agreement with heaven's judgment against his wrong.

### **Stage Four**

In stage four, the priest sprinkled the blood on the sides of the altar of burnt offerings. Interestingly enough, to atone for actions against God in the sin offering, the blood had to be sprinkled on the horns of the altar of burnt offerings or on the horns of the altar of sweet incense in the Holy Place. However, in this sacrifice, the blood was sprinkled around the base of the altar, the lower half of the altar, indicating that atonement was secondary. The restitution and satisfaction had taken care of the major issues of offended justice. The open and public confession of the trespass indicated that the individual was trying to right the wrong and that he had agreed with God's judgment in the slaying of his sacrifice. Therefore, the sprinkling of the blood brought about what is called marginal atonement.

### **Stage Five**

In stage five, the fat was removed from the sacrifice, placed upon the altar of the burnt offerings and incensed or fumed to God. Once again, as in the fat of the sin offering, this would go up before God as His "sweet savor" portion of the sacrifice. It is evident that atonement had been made, forgiveness had been given and fellowship had been restored as God expressed His pleasure by accepting the fat as sweet savor. It smelled good to God when His people after doing wrong, then righted the wrong and turned in repentance

seeking fellowship with God. God granted it. They were forgiven. Only after atonement had been accepted did the fat become sweet savor.

## Stage Six

The last stage of this sacrifice involved the disposition of the body. As in the sin offering, so also is the trespass offering. Leviticus 7:7 says that the law of the sin offering and the law of the trespass offering are the same. There is one law for both of them. The priest who was officiating at the altar received the sacrificial body as a gift from God. It was to be eaten in the courtyard of the Tabernacle (Leviticus 7:6). Once again, God was seen celebrating and hosting a festive banquet for His priests. They had been participant in the processes of restoration of a man who had strayed from God and was restored to fellowship. All the priests of the Levitical tribe could participate in the feast.

## Lessons From the Trespass Offering

There are some major lessons that must be learned from the trespass offering. Perhaps the most important lesson to be learned is that a man can trespass against God. He can rob God by depriving Him of the worship, service and offerings of his life, substance that God rightfully demands. In the sin offering, it is faith that a man expresses toward God's willingness to forgive his sin when the proper sacrifice is made. But in the trespass offering, it seems to be that repentance is the major issue for the offender. He must bring forth the fruits that are worthy of repentance (Matthew 3:8). Faith is demanded in the trespass offering as well as the sin offering. But the trespass offering demands more than simple faith. It demands repentance.

Another lesson we learn from the trespass offering is that with or without the sacrifice a man is not right with God until

he has made things right with his neighbor. One cannot be right with his neighbor with his neighbor's money still in his pocket.

It does not matter what station an individual occupies, what office he holds or what economic level he occupies; that does not in any way attenuate his guilt. God's justice and righteousness are to be defended in the trespass offering. The priest or the judge will hand down God's decision; a man must bow himself to that decision or else die.

A beautiful lesson to be learned from the trespass offering is found in Matthew 5:23-24. Jesus said,

*"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift."*

Evidently, if you have trespassed against your brother, then taking care of the demands of justice must precede acceptable atonement sacrifices before God.

Then Jesus adds in verses 25-26:

*"Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."*

Jesus is building the moral demands from the passages demanding strict justice in the Law of Moses.

Jesus insists that it is best to give in to the initial demands of the offended neighbor as he evaluates the damage. For if the matter goes to the judge or priest, then their decision could be more rigid. Whatever the judge's decision, it must be accepted or they must face the penalty of death. If the offender does not

have the resources to pay, then he will become as an indentured servant, perhaps with his entire family, to the one he offended until the debt is fully paid.

## **Jesus Christ Is Our Trespass Offering**

Jesus is the one who has covered all of our trespasses. Isaiah 53:10 says: “*. . . the LORD makes his life a guilt offering. . .*” In verse 11 God will see His sacrifice and therewith be “*satisfied*.” In the word “*satisfied*” is contained the Biblical doctrine of propitiation, the doctrine of satisfaction. There are many passages of scripture that indicate to us that God’s law demands satisfaction: Romans 3:21, Hebrews 2:17 and 1 John 2:2 and 4:10. Jesus is the satisfaction. He more than pays the guilt. In 2 Corinthians 5:19 we read that God was in Christ on the cross, “*. . . reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them.*” Jesus bore the guilt; He covered the debt and accepted the penalty in His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary.

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## NADAB AND ABIHU

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### **Leviticus 10:1-20 and Numbers 3:4-5**

This chapter presents the tragic events surrounding the death of Nadab and Abihu, the two oldest sons of Aaron, the High Priest. They committed several grievous sins that more than justified God's severe judgment against them that day. The event is recorded in Leviticus 10:1-20, and mention is made of it again in Numbers 3:4-5. It involves considerable historical background that needs to be studied in order to understand the total context. Let us look at the background just for a moment.

### **Historical Background to the Day**

#### **The Day of Leviticus 10 Was No Ordinary Day In Hebrew History**

The circumstances relating to the events of that day make it a very special day. The day of Leviticus 10 was no ordinary day in Hebrew history. Chronologically it ties in with Exodus 40:34-38. There had been extensive preparation of the materials that went into the building of the Tabernacle. On that day all of the materials had been accumulated, and the Tabernacle had been erected and had been inspected by Moses. He had received detailed instructions on the pattern of the Tabernacle when he was on the mountain receiving the Law. God had warned him that everything had to be built according to the pattern given. When the Tabernacle was finished, inspected, and approved by Moses as fitting the pattern, it was

ready for inauguration into use.

Suddenly, there came a cloud from heaven that descended upon the Tabernacle (cf Exodus 40:34). That indicated that God had taken up His symbolic residence in the presence of Israel. That was the specific moment in Leviticus 10 that ties in to the events of this particular day. It was inauguration day. It was the day that Moses would inaugurate the use of the Tabernacle as the place where atonement and worship sacrifices were to be conducted.

### **Inauguration Day for Hebrew Worship**

The priests, Aaronic and Levitical, had just been ordained, and they were ready to begin their functions. The sacrifices had been explained, and the whole series of offerings had been prepared. They were ready for the celebrations of that day. The whole nation was present for the inauguration of the Tabernacle, the priests and the sacrifices.

Aaron and his sons were dressed in the garments that had been specifically prepared for them. According to Exodus 28:2-3 the “*. . . sacred garments . . . to give him dignity and honor . . .*” had been prepared by men and women especially endowed by God with the skills to make their special clothing for the consecration ceremonies.

They were to function as representatives of heaven to earth. Therefore, their garments reflected their sacred roles. Moses was ready to finish the ceremonies of consecration of Aaron and his sons into their priestly office.

### **Aaron and Sons Consecrated**

Officially installing Aaron and his sons into their priestly office required considerable ceremony. The first part of the ceremony, described in Leviticus 8 and 9, found Moses pouring the oils of consecration on the head of Aaron and on his sons. The anointing oils were also placed on their right ear lobes, then on the thumbs of their right hands and finally on the big toes of their right feet. The purpose of such apparent extensive

use of the oils of consecration was to sanctify their head, ears, hands and feet. The head represented their thinking toward God, the ears to hear revelations from God, the hands to serve before God and the feet to walk in God's holy presence.

### **The Sin Offering Slain**

Then Moses prepared the ram of the sin offering for Aaron and his sons. He took the blood of the ram and did with the blood exactly what he had done with the oil. He placed it on the ear, the thumb, and the big toe of the right foot. The purpose was not to consecrate but to purify. Their entire bodies were cleansed of sin so as to qualify them for service before Jehovah. Hebrews 7:27 affirms that the priests first had to offer atonement sacrifices for themselves and then for the people.

### **All of Israel Is Present and The Sacrifices and Celebration Begins**

As mentioned, the whole congregation of Israel was assembled outside the courtyard of the Tabernacle. Aaron and his sons began offering the complete repertoire, the total series of Levitical sacrifices. They took the burnt offering and laid it on the altar in the courtyard of the Tabernacle. They offered the sacrifice of the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. They removed the fat from those animals and placed them in appropriate fashion on the altar.

God had symbolically taken up residence in the Tabernacle, more specifically in the Holy of Holies. The external signs of His presence were the pillar of fire by night and the column of smoke by day, both ascending into heaven. Those signs were always visible to all the tribes of Israel. Then immediately, tying in with the context of Exodus 40:36ff, fires came from the presence of God and consumed the sacrifices and fat that were on the altar of burnt offerings. This event is described in Leviticus 9:24b: "*And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.*" That was the very moment that Nadab and Abihu began their ill-fated actions.

When God took up His residence in the Tabernacle, it was an evident sign that He accepted its structure as faithfully adhering to the pattern He had given Moses. When God Himself lit the fires of the altar, it was an evident sign that He had accepted the Aaronic priesthood and the sacrifices they offered. All the people fell face down in evident reverence and praise for God's presence with them.

## Nadab and Abihu Offer Strange Fire

### The Consequences of Ignoring God's Commands

This was the specific moment in which Nadab and Abihu took their censers, placed fire in them, added the incense and then offered it "before Jehovah." Just as the fires had come out from the presence of the Lord and had consumed the sacrifice of the burnt offering and the fat upon the altar, fire came from before Jehovah and consumed the two sons of Aaron. They died before the Lord.

### The Fire Did Not Consume Their Clothing

The fires did not consume their clothing, for a little bit later their kinsmen came into the Tabernacle and carried them outside the camp, the text says, ". . . still in their tunics . . ." (Leviticus 10:5).

### The Sin of Nadab and Abihu Was Not Trivial

The sins of Nadab and Abihu may appear to us to have been trivial, maybe a mistake in judgment. The actions of God may appear to have been harsh, arbitrary and even excessively heavy. Could He not have used a little bit of tolerance, shown a little more mercy on this day?

## The Sins of Nadab and Abihu

### That Was "Inauguration Day"

The sins of Nadab and Abihu were much more grievous

than they appear on the surface. Their sins were many, and therefore God had to intervene. This was the day the Tabernacle, the priests and their sacrifices were all inaugurated. No abuse of the orders regulating those three aspects of Hebrew worship and atonement could be tolerated. No change in ceremonies could be allowed. No one could justify personalized and totally unauthorized revisions in God's ordinances. If God had allowed such arbitrary innovations on that most significant day, then it would have been difficult for Him to govern the proceedings of the people from that generation forward.

### **A Day of Reverence and Awe**

While the whole congregation was bowed in reverence before God, Nadab and Abihu, it appears, glibly, without any caution whatsoever, rushed into the Holy of Holies. They rushed into a place where angels fear to tread. There was a precedent in Exodus 19:24 that should have taught proper respect for God. In that context, God was ready to appear on Mount Sinai to give the Law to Moses; He instructed Moses to put boundaries around the mountain and to charge the people that they not come up to the mountain. God told Moses,

*“Go down and warn the people so they do not force their way through to see the LORD and many of them perish. Even the priests, who approach the LORD, must consecrate themselves, or the LORD will break out against them” (Exodus 19:21-22).*

God's appearance on the mountain was not an occasion for curiosity nor for gawking at the presence of Jehovah. Exodus 19:12-13 even insists that if an animal were to touch the mountain he was to be stoned to death. The all-holy God was coming down into the presence of the children of Israel, a sinful nation. God instructed Moses to go down and tell the people not to come up. Moses replied, “We have already done

that,” and God said, “Go and do it again.” He did not want any sinful man to walk brazenly into His presence for purposes of curiosity or for any giddy reason. It appears that such “forced” presence before God by Nadab and Abihu well defines the reasons God “broke out against them.”

### The Unacceptable Offering

Let us look at some of the sins Nadab and Abihu committed. Not only were they unauthorized in their actions, but they also engaged in ceremonies *“contrary to his command”* (Leviticus 10:1). They offered “. . . strange fire before the *LORD*, . . .” (Leviticus 10:1, NASU) and that in a place where they should not have been. “*Strange fire*” was simply fire that was not authorized. That word “*strange*” comes from the Hebrew word *zar*, which is consistently used in their language to indicate anything that was unauthorized.

Normally, the fires that were to be placed in the censers for the offering of incense—a symbol of prayer—were to be taken from the altar of burnt offerings in the courtyard. Remember, those were the fires that Jehovah had lit. Those were the only fires that were to be used. Nadab and Abihu had obviously gotten fire from some other source. In Leviticus 16:12 it is clear that on the Day of Atonement Aaron was to take the fires from the altar of burnt offerings for the purpose of burning incense to God.

In Numbers 16:46, during the uprising or the rebellion of Korah and his company, God opened the earth and swallowed them alive, and they went down to death because they had dared to rise up against Aaron, God’s anointed priest. There were a number of people who began to die around the Tabernacle. God instructed Moses on that occasion to separate himself from Korah lest he die. Moses commanded Aaron to take fires from the altar of burnt offerings with which to burn incense before Jehovah so that His wrath may be abated.

Exodus 30:9 insists that the altar of incense and the fires God demanded be respected. “*Do not offer on this altar any*

*other incense . . .” (zar or “strange incense” in Hebrew). Exodus 30:33 is quite clear: “Whoever makes perfume (incense) like it and whoever puts it on anyone other than a priest must be cut off from his people.” No strange incense, no strange priest, and no strange fires were to be allowed by God. None of those had any part of God’s patterns contained in the Law of Moses. In Numbers 16:40, “. . . no one except a descendent of Aaron should come to burn incense before the LORD . . .” “No one” meant no authorized person.*

God had lit those fires, and it was those fires that He intended as the source of the coals used for burning incense. Remember, from Leviticus 6:10, 11 and 13 that those were the fires that were never to go out.

### **“Before Jehovah” – Evidently in the Holy of Holies!**

Nadab and Abihu were wrong to offer incense with fires that God had not authorized, but that was just the beginning of their sins. They offered the incense in the wrong place. It is said: “. . . they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord . . .” The terminology “. . . before the Lord . . .” had already been used in the historical context of that day. Leviticus 9:24 uses the same language to define the origin of the fires that consumed the sacrifices on the altar. Such language implies that the words “before the Lord” refer to His residence in the Holy of Holies.

Nadab and Abihu must have walked into the Holy of Holies, the immediate, symbolic presence of God. Numbers 3:4 indicates that they had gone into the Holy of Holies and that they died “. . . before the Lord . . .” Leviticus 16:1-2 is very clear in its description of what Moses meant when he used the term “before the Lord.” The warnings given in chapter 16 seem to be based on the tragedy surrounding the case of Nadab and Abihu.

*“The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who died when they approached the*

*LORD. The LORD said to Moses: ‘Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover of the ark, or else he will die . . .’*

His two sons had died for having done that very thing.

The wrong fire, the wrong place, the wrong priests—everything surrounding the actions of Nadab and Abihu was wrong! According to the arrangement of the furnishings of the Tabernacle, the normal place for offering incense was in the Holy Place. The only exception was on the Day of Atonement. However, the events of Leviticus 10 were not on the Day of Atonement. There was a veil of separation between the outer court and the Holy Place and another veil of separation between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. Those veils were there to keep unauthorized personnel from drawing near to God—those veils were not to be ignored! The veils were not to be penetrated by anyone who had not been chosen and strictly informed by God about the services they were to render.

It is clear from both Leviticus and Hebrews that those veils of separation represented the sin problem. Until the sin had been removed at the cross of Calvary those veils stood to interdict the entrance of sinful man into the presence of the sinless God. When Christ paid the penalty for sin in His death, the veil of separation between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place in the Hebrew temple was torn in two by Christ. The tearing of the veil at Jesus' death signaled that He had fully solved the sin problem.

However, the sin problem had not yet been solved in the days of Nadab and Abihu, and their actions seemed to completely ignore the reason for which God had designed the veils in the structure of the Tabernacle. There were two cherubim woven into the fabric of each curtain of the Tabernacle. They were the heavenly avengers of God, those who were the appointed guardians of God's holiness. Cherubim

were also placed at the east of Eden to prohibit Adam and Eve from re-entering the Garden of Eden after their fall and partaking of the Tree of Life, thus living forever in their rebellion to God (Genesis 3:24).

### **“Contrary to His Command”**

The Hebrew version simply states that the two priests had offered incense “which God commanded them not.” Quite evidently God had given specific instruction about the rituals to be carried out on that day. There were no instructions related to the burning of incense by them. Nadab and Abihu ignored the instructions of God. They made up their own patterns and began to do as they wanted. Therefore, God intervened and punished their rash, presumptuous actions with death.

In religious matters, particularly those that relate to the worship of God, it is as abusive in the sight of God to act without command as it is to act against command. The most evident thing Nadab and Abihu could have concluded was that if God had wanted them to offer incense, He would have commanded that it be done. It is not easy to determine just where the prohibition of the Hebrew text of Leviticus 10:1 should be placed. The passage says: “which he commanded them not.” The absence of command may have related to the offering of incense in the first place. It may have related to the unauthorized fires that were not commanded, or it may have related to the two priests themselves who were not assigned to the functions of the incense, if such had been commanded on that day. There was an entire series of unauthorized activity by the two.

Quite evidently, God had given commands, and they had ignored them. God had not given other commands, and they made up their own programs. Both of those actions were presumptuous sins that could not be ignored on the part of God. Hebrews 9:1 affirms this, *“Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary.”* The word for “regulations” in Greek suggests that God’s Word

carried the force of law, an ordinance relating to legal and judicial decisions. Such terminology simply affirms that it was God who established the norms and rituals of worship under the Old Testament system. From this episode in Leviticus 10, it is clear that He does not well countenance His servants trifling with His ordinances.

### **On the Day of Atonement the High Priest Alone Will Enter the Holy of Holies**

On the Day of Atonement the High Priest entered alone into the Holy of Holies. In Leviticus 16:2 Moses instructed Aaron:

*“Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover (the mercy seat) on the ark, or else he will die . . .”*

The sins of Nadab and Abihu caused God to warn Aaron. He could not think that he could jump up and run into the Holy of Holies anytime he chose to. If he were to enter other than at the specified time, he would die, as in fact Nadab and Abihu did.

Leviticus 16:17 demanded:

*“No one is to be in the Tent of Meeting from the time Aaron goes in to make atonement in the Most Holy Place until he comes out . . .”*

God was to appear in the cloud on the mercy seat. That was the place that the Hebrews referred to as the “*Shikenah Glory*,” the place of the glory of Divine presence. The warning quite obviously grew out of the death of Nadab and Abihu. Aaron was not to enter the Most Holy Place “. . . whenever he chooses . . .” (verse 2)

These restrictions were built into the strong redemptive typology that will later be amply explained in the book of

Hebrews. The functions that the High Priest carried out alone on the Day of Atonement (described in Leviticus 16) were symbolic of the fact that Jesus Christ Himself would later accomplish the redemptive processes alone. Jesus did not have a twin or a brother like Nadab and Abihu to assist Him in the redemptive accomplishment. He accomplished it by Himself. Tragically, Nadab and Abihu had gone into the Holy of Holies as a committee. Jesus did not have a committee to help Him when He accomplished the fulfillment of the typology that was inaugurated for the Day of Atonement. Not only was Jesus seen in the sacrifices of that day but also in the ceremonial activity conducted by Aaron on that day.

### **Nadab and Abihu Were Quite Possibly Drunk**

There is another possible sin of Nadab and Abihu. They might have been drunk. In Leviticus 10:8-9, after they had been burned, Aaron is told by God:

*“You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the Tent of Meeting, or you will die.”*

There is strong indication that seems to explain why the two sons died. God did not want Aaron to commit the same sin that Nadab and Abihu had committed. Why would God interrupt the ceremonies of the day of inauguration just to give warnings about drinking wine—unless it had some relationship to the sins of Nadab and Abihu? There must have been some connection.

### **They Perhaps Drank the “Drink Offering”**

Then there was another fact that needs to be brought into the picture. In Leviticus 10:10 God said to Aaron: *“You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean.”* The “*holy*” belonged to God; the “*common*” could be used for common purposes. When the

Hebrews brought their *nasik* (the drink offerings of their first-fruits), it was never intended for priestly consumption. The Hebrew word *nasik* simply means “that which is poured out at the altar or burnt offerings to God.” It was always a sin for anyone to consume any of the first-fruits that belonged to God. That was studied under the discussions relative to the trespass offering.

God told Aaron in verse 10 that he must distinguish between the holy and the common—a fact that obviously Nadab and Abihu did not do. Nadab and Abihu seemed to have drunk the drink offering on that day. They made no distinction between wines that belonged to God and the common wine that could have been consumed elsewhere.

It is clear that Nadab and Abihu were the wrong people doing the wrong thing in the wrong place on the wrong day with the wrong condition of inebriation and for the wrong purpose—and all that against the right commands that the Lord had given. Their sins were not trivial. They violently perverted Biblical typology. All that which was being inaugurated that day belonged to the shadows of future realities that would be accomplished in and by Jesus Christ. Any change in that which foreshadowed the coming of Christ in His sacrifices would naturally impose changes in that which was the reality. There could be allowed no change in the blueprint without changing the future structure. The Holy Spirit was revealing all those rituals; He wanted the blueprint to be respected, for it foreshadowed everything that was to be accomplished by Christ in fulfillment of all typology.

## God Explains His Motives

### God’s Reasons Cannot Be Challenged

Certainly God wanted everyone to understand why He intervened in such a dramatic, definitive way against the two priests. In Leviticus 10:3 God imperatively insisted: “*Among those who approach me I will show myself holy.*” In other

words, those who serve God as priests must treat Him with the respect He deserves. After all, He is God! He seems to be saying: “I am the Holy God, and I will be treated with utmost reverence by those who come near to serve me.” Man does not have the right to change the patterns that God has inaugurated.

### **Everyone Must Be Informed**

Then God said one other thing: “*. . . in the sight of all the people I will be honored*” (verse 3). He demands that His holy Person be glorified by His worshipers. This statement and the one just above are presented in the imperative mood in the Hebrew language. All of the people were assembled before the Tabernacle that day, and if God had allowed the two priests, His representatives, to trample His laws in such a public way with impunity, it would have been impossible for Him ever to govern His people’s worship in later generations.

### **Aaron Not Allowed to Mourn the Death of His Sons**

Aaron was not allowed to mourn the death of his sons. God told him: “*Do not let your hair become unkempt, and do not tear your clothes, or you will die . . .*” (verse 6) Letting the hair go loose and rending the clothing was an external sign of mourning for the dear or for disaster of any kind. The reason for that prohibition was that Aaron could show absolutely no disagreement with what God did that day. God’s representatives must stand in perfect and total agreement with His actions. Aaron could not take off his turban and cast it down in disgust over God’s punishment of his two sons. No temper tantrums were allowed on Aaron’s part.

### **One Other Ritual Perversion Performed That Day by Aaron**

#### **The Sin Offering Was Burned – Not Eaten**

There was one other ritual violation that took place that day. In Leviticus 10:16 Moses began looking for the body of

the sin offering. The blood of that sacrifice had not been taken into the Holy Place for atonement. Its body, therefore, was to be eaten by the priests in the courtyard of the Tabernacle as a festive celebration hosted by God. However, the sacrificial body of the animal could not be found. It had been taken out of the camp and burned in violation of the ritual demands governing the sacrifice. That was against the instructions that God had given.

### **Moses Demands an Explanation**

Moses was angry and perhaps afraid. He came to Aaron and said:

*“Why didn’t you eat the sin offering in the sanctuary area? . . . Since its blood was not taken into the Holy Place, you should have eaten the goat in the sanctuary area, as I commanded”* (verses 17-18).

### **Aaron’s Explanation**

Aaron explained with these words:

*“Today they sacrificed their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, but such things as this have happened to me. Would the LORD have been pleased if I had eaten the sin offering today?”* (verse 19).

Aaron felt personally responsible for the sins of his sons, and he felt that God had punished him for his oversight. He should have been more attentive to the actions of his sons that day. He asked the question in verse 19, ‘*Would the LORD have been pleased if I had eaten the sin offering today?*’ He seemed to feel that God had so recently poured out against Aaron’s house, and it might have been presumptuous for Aaron to assume that God would so readily host a celebration meal in Aaron’s honor in the Tabernacle. Aaron seems to be saying: “Maybe

tomorrow, yes. Maybe next week, yes.”

### **Aaron’s Logical Reasoning**

Remember that the eating of the sacrificial body in the courtyard of the tabernacle was a festive celebration between God and His priests, a banquet that He hosted at His house, at His Tabernacle. “*Would the LORD have been pleased if I had eaten the sin offering today? When Moses heard this, he was satisfied*” (verses 19- 20). The reasons for Aaron’s actions were totally different from those of Nadab and Abihu. Nadab and Abihu had thrown caution to the wind. It is easy to understand why Aaron would have been excessively cautious at this point. It just seemed to Aaron that had he presumed to ignore the events surrounding the death of his sons, to expect God to celebrate in festive fashion the work of Aaron, would have been out of place that day.

The sins of Nadab and Abihu were many, and they were serious perversions of God’s ordinations. God was more than justified in intervening in such a sober and serious manner. There are many important lessons to be learned from this tragic episode.

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# THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

## (Part One)

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**Leviticus 16:1-34 and Numbers 29:7-11, 30:10**

This chapter presents the introduction to the ceremonies and sacrifices of the great Day of Atonement. This will be the last sacrifice to be studied in this course. The final part of the study of the Day of Atonement will be covered in the next chapter. Leviticus 16:1-34 contains most of the instructions and explains most of the purposes related to its ceremonies. Mention is made of the Day of Atonement in Numbers 29:7-11 and again in Numbers 30:10. This chapter will study the Day of Atonement, together with the extensive obligations of Aaron, the anointed high priest. Then we will look at the full implications of all of the ceremonials of the day as a prophecy of the total sacrificial ministry of Jesus Christ.

### **Historical Background of Day of Atonement**

#### **Name: Day of Atonement**

The name for Day of Atonement in Hebrew is *Yom Kippur*. It literally means “the day of covering.” *Kafar* in Hebrew means “to cover.” In Genesis 6:14 the same word is used in God’s command to Noah to “cover” the ark with pitch (that is, tar). Therefore, on the Day of Atonement there were several aspects of Hebrew worship and redemption that were to be “covered” or atoned for. It was not simply a covering of sin. The covering was much broader in scope. That will be understood better as we proceed through the ceremony. The

rich symbolism of that day was nothing more than a beautiful, prophetic anticipation of the work of Jesus Christ.

### **The Most Significant Day in the Hebrew Calendar**

The Day of Atonement was the greatest and most significant day on the Hebrew calendar of celebrations. On that day the sin offering received its most complete development and its most signal meaning.

### **It Is Basically National in Thrust**

It was national in thrust, yet each individual Hebrew was expected to enter into the spirit, the mood and the attitude of the day. He was expected to personalize its ceremonies—indeed to make personal application of everything that happened—as though everything that was done applied to himself alone. He was to approach the day as if all the ceremonies were being conducted exclusively for him.

The Day of Atonement contained the highest expression of symbolic expiation, atonement and reconciliation between God and His covenant people. All of the prerequisites of the sacrifices and of the functions of the High Priest were necessary in order to establish and maintain fellowship and covenant union between God and the nation of Israel. The object, purpose and necessity of the Day of Atonement need to be explained.

### **The Object, Purpose and Necessity for the Day of Atonement**

#### **To Present Atonement for Sin as God Accounts Sin**

There are several reasons that explain the Day of Atonement. First, it presented atonement for sin as God accounts sin, not as man records his wrong doings. Out of man's ignorance there were many laws that he violated without being conscious either of the law or of his violation of it. Man has never been dependable in determining what is right and

what is wrong. He is not at all consistent in the monitoring of his actions. Often the sinner is not even conscious of his sin. Leviticus 4:2, 13, 22, 27 and 5:15 mention sins committed unintentionally, or “unwittingly” as another version says—in other words, sins committed in ignorance. It was possible for man to ignore many of his sins, but God did not and could not ignore them. Those sins still had to be covered by sacrificial blood.

### To Reveal the Inadequacies of the Sacrificial System

The Day of Atonement was needed to convince Israel that their sacrificial system was not really dealing with the sin problem at all. There were factors built into the system that fully demonstrated its shadow nature. There were built-in evidences that the ceremonies of the day simply pointed to the one great sacrifice in the future that would actually make full atonement for sin—the sacrifice of Christ. There will be ample explanations of that as we continue into the commentary on Leviticus 16.

Another reason was that God wanted to establish, through a system of sacrificial prophecy, the finished work of Jesus Christ. Everything involved in that day pointed directly and exclusively to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross of Calvary. The day was also prophetic of the continuing work of Jesus Christ as the great High Priest who constantly applies the benefits of His sacrificial blood on behalf of sinful mankind. God wanted to build a shadow prophecy of the reality of Messianic redemption so that future generations could learn to depend exclusively on the coming Messiah. The Hebrews could not have understood back then that their “shadow sacrifices” (which they offered) could only give “shadow atonement.” Such understanding can be appreciated only after the “reality sacrifice” of Christ can and does grant “reality forgiveness.”

**Atonement Must Be Universal**

On that day, atonement was given universal attention. It was not only for the sins and trespasses of the priests and the whole nation, but also for everything related to the Tabernacle. Aaron, his household and the whole congregation were to all be involved in the Days of Atonement. Even the Most Holy Place, the very symbolic residence of God, had to be cleansed of any impurity or contamination because of the sins of the people. The burnt offering altar in the courtyard of the Tabernacle had to be cleansed and purified because many sins had been symbolically covered there.

Even God, the all Holy God, had His presence among a nation that was sinful. Therefore He had to clear Himself of any thinking on the part of Israel that might contaminate Him by simple association with sinful men. God's fellowship with Israel must not be construed so as to make Him a partner with them in their sin. God's residence must be purged of contamination. All of that had to be clarified to establish His innocence and holiness.

**To Show the Insufficiency of Daily Sacrifices**

God wanted to prove to the Hebrew people that any system of sacrifices based on one sacrifice for one sin could never meet the needs of the people and could certainly never meet the needs of God. The utter insufficiency of the daily sacrifice to cover the daily sins of the people stood proven. They just were not adequate to handle the sin problem. Such a problem was further aggravated by the fact that the people did not always have the full knowledge of the Law. They were certainly not even keeping all of the laws that they did know.

The fact that man has always had a poor memory of his wrong doing intensified the need for the Day of Atonement. Even if a man had the best of intentions when he became aware of his wrongdoing and planned to offer the required sacrifice, he could soon forget his intent. The result would be that the sin would remain uncovered. Maybe he even promised himself, "I

will take care of it next week or next month,” but before long he forgot. It was easy for man to fail in sacrificial requirements because of ignorance, neglect, forgetfulness or indifference. Regardless, those sins had to be accounted and atoned for somewhere. Therefore, they needed a Day of Atonement on which all of the sins of all the people could be accounted for and covered.

It is quite evident that there were simply not enough animals in the nation of Israel to take care of all of the sins and trespasses of all the people. In looking back into the book of Leviticus and contemplating the situation, it is evident that some men could wipe out a herd of animals or a flock of goats or sheep in a month or so.

### **The Holiness of God Vindicated and Defended**

On this Day of Atonement the holiness of God had to be vindicated. He had to defend the righteousness of His dealings with an unrighteous people. God did have external signs of His presence and fellowship with Israel. That fact could create an impression that He was an accomplice and a partner with them in their sin. Such was the obvious implication the Jews drew about Jesus in His association with sinners (Luke 15:1-2, Matthew 11:19). Potentially, every sin had to be covered before God and the worshiper could have proper fellowship. Therefore, the Day of Atonement was needed.

God has His residence, according to the statement of Leviticus 16, among sinful men. On the Atonement day Aaron was to take the blood of the priest’s bull.

*“He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. He is to do the same for the Tent of Meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness” (Leviticus 16:15b-16).*

Then again, he was to take the blood of the people's goat and do with it as he had done with the blood of the bull. Then he would take the blood of both the bull and the goat and apply it to the altar of burnt offerings in the courtyard of the Tabernacle.

*"He shall take some of the bull's blood and some of the goat's blood and put it on all the horns of the altar. He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites"* (verses 18-19).

Such ceremonies were imposed so that God could be cleared of any contamination by association. This was stressed on the Day of Atonement.

### **The Whole System Foreshadowed Christ**

The Day of Atonement stressed the total dependance of God's people upon the finished work of Calvary—in the future as to time, but very visible in the ceremonies that were being unfolded that day. All the sacrifices quite evidently foreshadowed Christ, and so did the High Priest in all his functions on the Day of Atonement; his work foreshadowed the work of Jesus Christ as the "reality" High Priest.

### **To Convict Israel of Its Sinfulness Before God**

God wanted to convince Israel of its sinfulness. The Day of Atonement impressed upon them that fact. It gave the people of Israel an opportunity to mourn over their sins. They were given a period of time especially dedicated to reflection about their sins and an opportunity for genuine repentance. Such repentance was to be shown through fasting, mourning and external manifestations of sorrow for their wrong doing. It offered each individual an occasion for personal and spiritual renewal.

*Yom Kippur* gave the Israelites the conviction that God had removed their sins and that they could enjoy the sense of forgiveness with confidence. God wanted to publicize before Israel His promise: “. . . *I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover*” (Leviticus 16:2). The atonement cover is called the “mercy seat” in other versions. It was from the mercy seat that God granted Israel forgiveness of their sins. God wanted the people to know that He would exercise mercy and grace to them.

### To Publicize God’s Promise

The total God-ward thrust of this day of Atonement was clearly established in the minds of the people. After all, He was the one whose law had been offended. He was the one who had to be appeased for the violations against His commandments that had brought guilt upon the people. God appeared on the cover lid of the ark of the covenant, and there He accepted sacrificial atonement for the people.

### To Send the Accumulation of a Year of Sins to the Cross

It will become evident, as we proceed in this study, that on the Day of Atonement God was interested in sending an accumulation of a year’s sins of the children of Israel to the cross of Calvary. That will be understood as we get into the study of the ceremony in our next chapter. God wanted to symbolize the sin-bearing mission of Jesus Christ. Whether they understood it or not, it is evident that God was building typology. He was preparing a beautiful shadow system that later generations would be able to identify once the sacrifice of Calvary had been accomplished.

## **Concept of Their Sins Being “Rolled Forward” is Wrong**

### **Implications of “Rolling Forward”**

It must be understood that Israel’s sins were forgiven on that day. They were forgiven but not covered. Many teachers of the book of Leviticus and even of the book of Hebrews seem to have the concept that those sins were “rolled forward” for a year. The thinking seems to be that in the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement, Israel’s sins were moved forward one full year until the next Day of Atonement. Then the blood of the next animals would roll them forward one more year. The process of moving their sins forward a year at a time would have continued until Christ was sacrificed on Calvary.

### **Refutation of This Concept**

Deeper study of such thinking exposes the fallacy of the “rolling forward” concept. There is absolutely no Biblical evidence to support the idea. If such were true, it would imply that the blood of bulls and goats did have some power to forgive sin, even if it was temporary. However, Hebrews 10:1-2 clearly states that the law was only a shadow of future realities. *“For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship”* (verse 1b). Besides that, Hebrews 10:4 assures us that the blood of animals could not remove sin, not even a little bit, not even for a moment.

Also, Hebrews 9:14 assures us that those sacrifices could only cleanse ceremonial defilements of the flesh, that is, outward ceremonial impurities only. They could not touch the conscience or the soul of the individual. They did not really remove the spiritual and moral guilt. They only removed the external impurities that would disqualify them from participation in the ceremonies of the Tabernacle.

Then again, Hebrews 10:3 says that those sacrifices brought a remembrance of sin, not a removal of sin. On that

day, God forgave Israel. But that meant that He personally accepted the responsibility of covering those sins through the sacrifice that Christ would offer later on the cross of Calvary. Hebrews 10:1 says they were simply shadows of good things to come. The good things to come, quite evidently, relate to the “reality” sacrifice of Christ. That sacrifice was even then on the horizon of God’s plans. It is clear that shadow sacrifices could give only shadow forgiveness. They could cleanse only external impurities. It took the “reality” sacrifice of Christ to cleanse the conscience of sin, according to Hebrews 9:14. Therefore, those sacrifices did not remove the sins for another year.

## The Necessity of Blood for Atonement

In their sacrifices the Hebrews only symbolically transferred their sins to their victims. When this study is completed in the next chapter, these concepts will be better understood. Notice an interesting passage in Hebrews 9:22: *“In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”* The statement “nearly everything” insists that blood was the principle cleansing element under the law, but not the only element used. In verses 19-21 the writer explained that some things were cleansed by blood, some by fire, some by water and some by scarlet wool and hyssop, but when it came to the remission of sins, according to the Law of Moses, there was absolutely no forgiveness without blood!

Often it is assumed that the writer is discussing in verse 21 the essentialness of the sacrifices of Christ. Though it is true that there can be no forgiveness of sin apart from the blood of Christ, the Hebrew writer is not discussing the sacrifice of Jesus. According to the Law of Moses, there was no forgiveness without the blood of those animal sacrifices!

### **Those Sacrifices Were Necessary for Forgiveness, But Not the SOURCE of Their Forgiveness**

Hebrews 9:22 is not referring to the sacrifice of Christ. “*And according to the Law . . .*” (NASU), those Hebrews could not be forgiven until the blood of their substitute sacrifices was shed. Yet they were not forgiven by animal blood. They could not be forgiven without the blood, yet they were not forgiven by the blood! This concept must be understood. There is a way in which we might be able to explain this. In the New Testament, Jesus promised in Mark 16:16, “*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved . . .*” Again in Acts 2:38 the apostle Peter told the Jews on the Day of Pentecost,

“*Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.*”

In Acts 22:16 Saul of Tarsus is told: “*Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away . . .*” 1 Peter 3:21 says, “*. . . baptism that now saves you also . . .*”

All of the above scriptures insist that baptism is the moment when sins are forgiven. Yet surely no one believes that it is a river, or a basin, or a baptistry of water that forgives our sin. However, it is at the baptistry that sins are forgiven. It is there that sinners come into contact with the cleansing blood of Christ. It is not the water that saves us. It is His blood that saves us. The believer is not cleansed by the baptistry, but cannot be cleansed without it! The baptistry recreates the redemptive connection that makes forgiveness possible.

### **Forgiveness Under the Old Law**

Much in the same way, the Hebrew manifested his faith and obedient acceptance of God’s arrangements for atonement, and thus offered his sacrifices and was forgiven. It was through the blood of his sacrificial substitute that the redemptive connection with Calvary was made. He came into spiritual contact with the future sacrifice of Christ, whose blood actually

removed the sin. So when God forgave those Hebrew people, He did so in view of the cross. It was as though He wrote a promissory note. “I will pay this later,” He seemed to be saying. It was as though He were creating a debt against His own righteousness and against His own justice. He simply “charged” the debt against Calvary.

Christ shed His blood, and Hebrews 9:15 says,

*“For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.”*

In other words, when Christ died He covered those promissory notes. God was forgiving people who were living under the law of Moses when they offered their sacrifices. He forgave them in view of Calvary, and He wrote a note of indebtedness against Calvary. Then Christ died to cover those debts, and therefore He redeemed their sins.

In the original Greek, this verse says that Jesus died to redeem sins. Why would anyone want to redeem sins? We read about the redemption of the soul in Ephesians 1:7, and we read about the redemption of the body in Romans 8:23. Here, however, we read about the “redemption of sins.” Quite evidently, those sins were already forgiven, but they were not yet covered. Christ died to cover those debts that God took upon Himself in view of the cross of Calvary. Romans 3:25 tells us that in the cross God “... did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.” Animal blood was not adequate punishment for human sin. God’s justice demanded the sacrificial punishment for human sin. God’s justice demanded the sacrificial blood of the man—Jesus. Jesus’ blood also demonstrates God’s righteousness in forgiving “... at the present time, . . .” insists the Roman passage (verse 26).

### **Omniscience of God Is Seen in Forgiveness**

Quite evidently, the omniscience or the foreknowledge of God was involved in His forgiveness of sins before and after the cross. In Old Testament times God was able to forgive sins in view of the future cross of Calvary. However, in New Testament times God's foreknowledge of our sins—sins not yet committed—were covered by Christ on the cross. God gathered up the sins of all future generations and allowed Christ to bear them, suffering the penalty for them on the cross of Calvary. So whether in the Old or New Testament times, it is evident that God's foreknowledge was functional.

### **The Timelessness of God's Grace**

1 Peter 1:20 states, "*He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.*" Already in the plan and purpose of God was the fact that the sacrifice of Christ was coming. Quite evidently, there was as much grace and mercy available from God to the people under the Old Testament as there is in New Testament times. All of it, in either the Old or New Testament times, has the same basis: the cross of Calvary, because the cross has always been in the mind and purpose of God. So the cleansing power of Calvary has always been available to God. Revelation 13:8 assures us that Jesus was the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world. The simple fact is that God can forgive any person in any age on the basis of the cross. That person must manifest his faith and be willing to comply through obedience to the conditions God may demand.

### **The Awareness of Forgiveness Under the Law**

#### **The Hebrews Knew They Were Forgiven, and Enjoyed It as We Do**

There are a number of salient facts that come to attention in the study of the Day of Atonement. The Hebrews knew their sins were covered, and they rejoiced in the full sense of their

forgiveness. We read in Leviticus 1:4 that if a man would offer his sacrifice, it would be accepted for him to make atonement for his soul. Leviticus 4:20, 31, 35; 5:6 and 10 assured the Hebrew that he was forgiven then and there. God did not become forgiving at the death of Christ. It was that death that justified His forgiveness beforehand.

Even before the Law of Moses, there were people who were counted righteous before God, even individuals who were sinners. In Romans 4 Paul used Abraham, an ungodly man, to show that God had always offered forgiveness to men on the basis of their faith and not on their performance. However, Genesis 15:6 says that Abraham believed God and his faith was credited to him as righteousness. Look at the record of Abraham. He was a righteous man in the eyes of God, not by performance, but by an obedient faith.

### **The Time of the Year Was Significant**

The time of the year of the Day of Atonement was very significant. It was on the tenth day of the seventh month (Leviticus 16:29). These two numbers, ten and seven in Hebrew numerals, have symbolic implications. Ten stands for the completion of, or the totality of, the work of God. There were ten pre-flood patriarchs. There were ten righteous men who could have saved the city of Sodom. There were the ten plagues in Egypt. There were the Ten Commandments that were given in the Law of Moses. Ten indicates the totality of God's word.

Seven also symbolizes the completed work of God. Therefore, when those two words are put together, you have God's activity of completely bringing about atonement. So, the tenth day of the seventh month is symbolic of the time that God would accomplish redemption. Even the Sabbath day symbolically implies the future redemption of the people of God and the eternal rest that they will have with Him.

## **Preparations for Day of Atonement**

### **Preparation of/by the People**

For the Day of Atonement, there were elaborate, imposing preparations required of the people and of the priests. The people were expected to spend the day in solemn convocation. They assembled at the Tent of Meeting (Leviticus 16:29-34). In Leviticus 23:26-32 the day is called a *Sabbath sabbathon*. In other words, it was a “high Sabbath,” a most holy day for the Hebrews. No work was allowed; they were to spend the day denying themselves, afflicting themselves and mourning their sins. Generally the idea of fasting was required of the Hebrew people on that day. Anyone who did not enter into the spirit of that day would be cut off from the people (Leviticus 23:29-30).

### **Preparation of/by the High Priest**

Aaron had to make special preparations for the day. That will be discussed in the next chapter. All of the other priests took their place with the rest of the people outside the Tabernacle courtyard on that day. They stood on common ground with the nation of sinners on this day. Atonement was made for them by Aaron and Aaron alone. However, each individual Hebrew was expected to identify with the spirit, the mood and the attitudes of the Day of Atonement or else he would be cut off from the people.

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# THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

## (Part Two)

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**Leviticus 16:1-34**

### Introduction

This is the final chapter in this series of studies on the sacrificial system of the Law of Moses. This closing chapter presents the conclusion of the sacrifices and the functions of the Day of Atonement taken exclusively from Leviticus 16:1-34. Aaron had to prepare himself. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the people had to prepare themselves for the day—but so did Aaron. His preparation involved several arrangements.

For all 364 days prior to the Day of Atonement, Aaron wore the glorious garments that had been specially prepared for him. They were called “... *sacred garments . . . to give him dignity and honor*” (Exodus 28:2). Other versions say they were “... *holy garments. . . for glory and for beauty.*” (NASU) They were multi-colored garments—the colors representing his function as heaven’s representative to the nation of Israel.

On the Day of Atonement, Aaron was to go into the Tabernacle, remove those garments and leave them there. He would then take a bath. Actually it was more a “baptism” as he prepared himself. This ceremonial bath seems to imply that he was being immersed into another role. Then he had to clothe himself with the simple, white linen garments of the ordinary servant priest to carry out the functions of the day. He was then ready to receive the sacrificial animals that were to be offered.

There were five animals that were selected for the Day of Atonement. First of all, there was the bull of the sin offering

that was for the priestly family, for Aaron and all the Levitical tribe. Then there was a ram, a male sheep, for a burnt offering for all of the priests. Then there were two goats, each of them representing one-half of the sin sacrifice for the people. The first goat was designated as Jehovah's. The second goat was designated as Azazel's. These two goats stood as one sacrifice. Leviticus 16:5 explains: "*From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering . . .*" Then there was another ram for a burnt offering for the people.

At the end of this chapter we will conclude the study of all of the sacrifices of the Law, giving special attention to the sacrifices and ritual of the Day of Atonement. Then we will explain the application of all of these sacrifices to the priestly sacrifices of Jesus Christ. Jesus is foreshadowed by all of the Levitical sacrifices, including those of the Day of Atonement as Aaron foreshadowed Jesus' work as the High Priest.

### **Review From Lesson Eleven**

By way of review, let us remember the time—the tenth day of the seventh month—a high Sabbath. Aaron was responsible for all of the functions of the sacrifices for that day. Leviticus 16:17 says that there would be no man in the Tent of Meeting from when Aaron went in until he came out. All the people had gathered in solemn assembly, and the High Priest had prepared himself by bathing and changing his garments. He was then ready to begin the ceremonies of the day. The five animals had been penned for a week and had been examined daily by Aaron to be sure that they were without flaw.

### **The Stages of the Ritual**

The rituals for the ceremonial that took place on the Day of Atonement were quite extensive. Stage one of the ceremony involved Aaron's preparations for the day. The removal of his ordinary High Priestly robes, the bathing, and the re-clothing of himself with the humble white, linen garments of the

ordinary servant priest constituted the first stage and was done in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle.

### **Stage One: Reception of the Preselected Animals**

This stage involved the reception of the animals that have already been mentioned—pre-selected for this day and examined for a week to be sure that they were without defect. On this day there was a final examination by Aaron to be sure that the animals were without any kind of flaw. The physical perfection of the animals symbolized the spiritual perfection of Christ Jesus. Therefore, they were shadows of the sacrifice of Christ that would be offered on the cross of Calvary.

### **Stage Two: Presentation of the Animals to God**

Stage three involved the presentation of all the animals to God. From that moment forward they belonged to Him. Their purpose was to accomplish global atonement. Each animal would serve the specific purpose and accomplish the function for which it was selected by Divine arrangement

### **Stage Three: Aaron Casts Lots Over the Two Goats of the People's Sin Offering**

Aaron then cast lots over the heads of the two goats. He would take two stones, one in each hand. “For Jehovah” was written in Hebrew on one of them, and on the other was written “For Azazel.” Aaron didn’t know which of the stones was in each hand, and he held them over the heads of the goats. He would open his hands and find the one that was for Jehovah. In Hebrew tradition, Aaron tied a scarlet ribbon around the neck of that goat because it would die. That one belonged to Jehovah. Then the other one was the goat for Azazel. Tradition says that Aaron tied a scarlet ribbon around the horn of that animal because that was the one that would become the

scapegoat.

### **Stage Four: Aaron Kills the Bull of the Priests' Sin Offering**

There was no laying on of the hands as in all the other sin-offering. Regardless of the graded level of the sin-offering, the laying on of hands was always demanded. Even in the ceremonies of the priestly consecration, the hands were laid on the sin-offering. The reason possibly being to indicate, even ceremonially, that the sacrificial animal was not really bearing the sin after all. Nevertheless the bullock was symbolically “*to make atonement for himself and his house*” (Leviticus 16:11).

### **Stage Five: The Incense is Offered**

After Aaron killed the bull of the sin offering for the priests, he was required, at this point, to take some incense and coals of fire from the altar of burnt offerings, as God had given specific instructions. With those embers from the altar placed in the censer, he was to take two handfuls of incense “beaten small.” Incense was a symbol of prayer. “Beaten small” simply means that it was finely ground into powder for quick burning.

Aaron was to take the incense into the Most Holy Place and offer it there—“*. . . so that he will not die*” (Leviticus 16:13). He had either pulled the veil of separation to one side or perhaps had lifted it up to make it possible for him to enter into the Most Holy Place. As soon as he crossed the threshold he would cast the two handfuls of incense upon the censer of coals or perhaps on the altar of incense that seems to have been moved into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. This created an immediate cloud of smoke that covered the mercy seat. In the symbolism of incense, it seems that Aaron thus offered a prayer for his survival—“*. . . so that he will not die*.” He seemed to be saying, “I know that I am entering the presence of the all Holy God, and I am an unholy man. I

acknowledge that I have no right to be here. I have come into Divine presence, because God so requires of my office.” It was an attitude of humility because of his sins. Perhaps this aspect of the ritual was built around the abusive entrance into the Most Holy Place by Nadab and Abihu as recorded in Leviticus 10.

### **Stage Six: Sprinkling Blood of the Bull**

In this same stage of the ceremony, Aaron applied the blood of the bull to the ark of the covenant (the mercy seat) seven times—“on the east side of the ark,” says the Hebrew. The Tabernacle faced the east, thus the east side of the ark was toward the rising of the sun—symbolic of God’s presence. Then he sprinkled the blood seven times before the mercy seat. Seven, remember, was the symbol for completion and for the work of God. Then he would retreat back into the Holy Place with the blood of the bull, and he would sprinkle the blood seven times before the curtain of separation between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. The blood that was left over was set down and left temporarily in the Holy Place.

### **Stage Seven: Kills Goat “For Jehovah” But “Before Jehovah”**

Then Aaron was to exit the Tabernacle and proceed with the slaying of the sacrificial goat that had the scarlet ribbon around its throat. That was the one for Jehovah. Then he had to take the blood of that goat and return to the Holy of Holies. He was to do with that sacrificial blood exactly as he had done with the blood of the bull—sprinkle it on the mercy seat, sprinkle it seven times before the mercy seat and retreat into the Holy Place to sprinkle it seven times before the veil in the Tabernacle.

This question arises: Why was this blood sprinkled in the Most Holy Place and in the Holy Place? Quite evidently these

were the symbolic quarters or residence of God in the presence of an unholy nation. Leviticus 16:16 says that he had to cleanse the Most Holy Place and the Holy Place

*“ . . . because of the uncleanness and the rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. He is to do the same for the Tent of Meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness.”*

God had to clear Himself of any implication of guilt simply by the fact that He was associating in the presence of sinful man.

*“Then he shall come out to the altar that is before the LORD (the altar of burnt offerings in the courtyard) and make atonement for it. He shall take some of the bull’s blood and some of the goat’s blood and put it on all the horns of the altar. He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites”* (Leviticus 16:18-19).

### **Stage Eight: The Azazel Ceremony**

Following is an overview of the last phase of the ceremony on the Day of Atonement. In stage eight, Aaron was required to lay both of his hands on the head of the goat for Azazel. When he offered the bull and the first goat for Jehovah there was no laying on of the hands. Quite evidently, that was in view of the fact that both hands would be laid upon the head of the goat for Azazel. One hand was laid there in representation of the priest, and the other hand was in representation of the people. Leviticus 16:21 tells us that when he lays his hands on the head of the goat, *“He is to . . . confess over it (the goat) all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat’s head.”* Such action involved the symbolic transfer of sin. Aaron could not possibly know all

the sins of Israel. So how could he confess them all? Some have suggested that he must have simply listed all the commandments of the Law and summarily acknowledged that Israel had violated each one of them. Yet, God surely knew all the laws He had given Israel and also all their violations of those laws.

### **Stage Nine: Removal of Goat for Azazel**

Aaron would then send the goat for Azazel into the desert. That goat was often called “the scapegoat.” A scapegoat, even in our modern usage, refers to any person who carries the guilt for the actions of others. Azazel’s goat was the sin-bearing animal. He was sent into the desert and there was released in *“a solitary place”* (verse 22). In later years, the Hebrews, perhaps as much out of superstition as fear, would later find that goat with the scarlet ribbon around his horn and push him over a cliff. They wanted to be sure the goat did not wander back into the camp with an accumulation of a year of Israel’s sins and trespasses still on his head. There seemed to be some fear that such would in some way contaminate the camp.

Aaron did not carry the goat out of the camp. He was sent out into the desert *“... in the care of a man appointed for the task”* (verse 21). That man was probably not a priest, otherwise it would have been specified. He was incidental to the ceremonies of the day. To indicate the fact that those sins were symbolically placed on the head of the goat, the man who led him into the desert was considered ceremonially unclean until he had bathed his body and changed his garments. Then when the sun had set, he would be clean and could re-enter the camp

### **Stage Ten: Aaron’s Robes Changed Again**

It is evident that Aaron was the only one conducting the totality of the ceremony. Aaron then re-entered the Tent of Meeting, the Tabernacle. He then had to remove the white

linen robes of the ordinary servant priest that had been used for the functions of the day. He was required to leave those garments in the Holy Place. He then once again bathed himself by immersion. In effect, Aaron would disappear and then reappear. This time he again clothed himself with the glorious garments that were characteristic of his regular service throughout the rest of the year. Those were the multicolored garments, according to Exodus 28:2, for glory, beauty, holiness and honor. He thus represented God's minister, God's representative to man or heaven's representative to earth.

### **Stage Eleven: Sacrificing the Burnt Offering**

Aaron then exited from the Holy Place, having re-clothed himself in his own garments and having sacrificed the burnt offerings—the ram for the priest and the ram for the whole congregation. The ceremony of these burnt offerings followed the format of the continual burnt offering as outlined in Leviticus 6:8-13. Then the blood was sprinkled in the appropriate fashion. These burnt offerings were sweet aroma sacrifices of worship of the priests and of the nation. It was naturally an expression of rededication of the priests and nation to fidelity toward God.

### **Stage Twelve: Burning the Fat of the Bull and Goat With the Burnt Offerings**

Aaron was required to remove the fat from the slain bull and goat. He did not have to remove the fat from the burnt offering rams; they would be burned entirely on the altar anyway. All the fat would be fumed to God. He placed the fat on the altar together with the burnt offerings and sacrificed them to God.

### **Stage Thirteen: Disposal of the Sin Offering Bodies**

Then Aaron would dispose of the bodies of the animals that had been offered for sin: the bull and the goat. They were to be carried outside of the gate of the camp of Israel. The reason is clear: they would be burned with the fires of *seraph*. Those were the fires of divine wrath against Israel's sin. There is definite typology built into this action. It was a "shadow" of the sufferings of Christ Jesus outside Jerusalem.

## **Meaning and Applications of the Day of Atonement**

### **Azazel – Compound Word in Hebrew Meaning – Strong Removal**

There are a number of applications to be made from these elaborate ceremonies. We need to give some attention to some of the ceremonies and then offer some of their obvious explanations. The first thing we want to notice is Azazel. That is a compound Hebrew word. The first part of the word means "strong" or "strength." The latter part of the word means "removal" or "taking away." Therefore, when the two meanings are joined the resulting meaning is the "strong removal of Israel's sins." That demanded that God, at a later date, would actually strongly remove all of the sins.

We also learn from this that the sins were symbolically removed from the camp. Generally, the goat is called the scapegoat. He was the one who bore the sin. Therefore, when this goat was led out into the desert, all of the people of Israel began to shout for joy and sing, "Hallelujah unto the Lord" because they knew that their sins had been removed. In the picture of the final judgment, presented in Matthew 25, the Lord will sit upon His throne and as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, so He will divide the innocent (the sheep) from the guilty (the goats). So quite evidently this goat was symbolically carrying the guilt of Israel into the desert.

**The Two Goats are ONLY ONE Sin Offering**

The third lesson to learn involves the explanation that these two goats were only one sacrifice. Therefore, they stood as a unit of accomplishing two different sides of the same redemptive activity. The first goat for Jehovah was presented as the cause and source of atonement. The second goat for Azazel was presented as the effect of atonement, granting forgiveness.

**Possibly Clear Suggestions of Jesus**

It suggests that in Jesus Christ the first goat actually died, so we see Jesus dying as the sacrifice on the cross. However, the second goat, as a part of that same sacrifice, was led into the wilderness. It foreshadowed Jesus in His resurrection. He survived the sacrifice; He came back from the grave. All through the ceremonies Aaron portrayed Jesus as the Great High Priest. Jesus, as the High Priest, officiated at the sacrificial offering of Himself on the cross. In the second goat, Jesus was seen as having been raised from the dead and, as further function of His High Priestly role, He removed the sin from His people. He is now alive, after His sacrifice, and is able to take away the sins of the people. Hebrews 9:26-27 indicates that Jesus put away the sins of the people with the sacrifice of Himself. Thus Jesus is seen as both of these goats and the bull offered that day.

**Aaron's Preparation**

Another important lesson is drawn from Aaron's preparation and from the role he carried that day. Aaron unclothed himself of his garments—those for glory, beauty and holiness—before he began the ceremonies of the day. That action indicated that when Jesus came down from heaven He had to divest Himself of all of the external qualities of His Divine glory, holiness and beauty that went with His deity. When He bathed Himself (immersed Himself), He thus seemed to disappear as the Divine being and then reappear after that

immersion as the humble servant and ministering Priest of God. By putting on the garments that would ordinarily characterize the position of a humble servant priest, He symbolically clothed Himself with humanity. It was in that function, as a human being, that He carried out His role as the humble servant of God, obedient to all the commands that God had given Him.

Then, having accomplished all of this activity of atonement, Aaron returned to the Tabernacle. He re-clothed himself with his royal robes of heavenly splendor. Thus we see Jesus ascend back to the right hand of the Father. Israel probably did not understand all of this. However, it is quite clear that God intended that the symbolism of that day—symbols designed and inaugurated by the Holy Spirit—would foreshadow the accomplished Priestly and sacrificial ministry of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 9:8-9 tells us that the Holy Spirit had some symbolic implications in what was happening on the Day of Atonement.

### **What of Israel's Sins Afterwards?**

Surely we have learned from this story that Israel's sins were not literally carried away by a goat, but just symbolically. What happened, then, to those sins that were symbolically placed on the head of the goat? Where were they once they had been carried out of the camp? Ask the Hebrew, "Where are you sins?" "Oh, they have been forgiven," he would reply. "Yes, but where are they now?" "Well, they are out in the desert on the head of a goat." "Are they going to stay there on the head of the goat?" "Well, I really don't know. I am sure that God will take care of them some way." Did the Israelite of Moses' day believe that Israel was saved by a goat? Every Hebrew would emphatically deny such an idea. None has ever believed that, but there must have been some way in which God was taking care of their sins.

### **Have the Sins Been Forgiven?**

At least this much they knew: their sins had been forgiven. Whether they understood it or not, they were forgiven because of their faith and obedience to God's arrangements for atonement. Also, only those who had personalized the ceremonies of that day could be forgiven. That made it possible for God to forgive them; they had entered into the spirit of the day and their sins had been forgiven—**though not yet covered**. It is clear that God assumed the responsibility for those sins. God seemed to be saying: "I will take care of those at the cross of Calvary."

### **One Goat for One Year Through Israel's History**

Another major lesson derives from the fact that one goat for each year of Israel's accumulated sin throughout the 1400 years of her history would create quite a flock of goats. All this seems to tell us that God accumulated 1400 goats that He had sent out into the wilderness. They were not simply sent out into the desert. They were directed to the foot of the cross of Calvary. If you can imagine through the eye of faith, in your mind, when Jesus was hanging on the cross, He was crucified with 1400 goats standing around the cross with an accumulation of 1400 years of Israel's sins upon their head. Then God removed those sins one by one and placed them on Christ. God treated Christ as though He had committed all those sins. The accumulation of Israel's sins over 1400 years were removed from the heads of the 1400 goats and were placed on Jesus. He died on the cross as a penalty for all of those sins. There those sins were actually taken care of, not symbolically, but in reality. That is the place where Jesus bore the guilt of the people. In His body on the tree the sins of the world were covered.

### **Three Days Later He Will Rise from the Dead**

Three days later Jesus was raised from the dead, as already symbolized in the goat for Azazel, the one that made strong

removal of sin. After fifty days Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father where He once again clothed Himself in His garments for glory, beauty and holiness as God. It is quite clear that in all of these ceremonies Jesus was being predicted, and it is clear that we must understand that both the ceremonies relative to the sacrifices and the priests are to be understood as fulfilled in Jesus.

We are told in Ephesians 2:8, "*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith . . .*" God graciously provided the sacrifice for the sins of the people, but He seems to be saying in substance: "I will accept this animal in substitution for you, because he really represents Jesus Christ. In the final analysis I will accept the sacrifice of Jesus on your behalf on the condition that you accept it also." That means that all men must accept the sacrifice of Christ as fulfilling the payment for their sins.

It was our sin that killed Him. As mentioned in some of the earlier chapters, we have to agree with God's judgment against our sins in the person of Jesus Christ and so agree that we accept the fact that He atoned for our sins. It was our sin that nailed Him to the cross. We would have to so agree to the point that we personally would be willing to drive the nails into His hands and the spear into His side, because in all practical reality it was our sins that killed Him.

## Summarization of the Sacrifices

By way of summary, let us put together all the sacrifices that were studied in this series. We must view each one of them as a different aspect of the one and only sacrifice of Christ. They must be brought together as a unit. Each of the sacrifices of the Law of Moses—the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, the trespass offering, the Day of Atonement offerings and the drink offering—symbolized Jesus Christ.

Each individual, out of guilt, has lost his life before God.

## The Day of Atonement (Part Two)

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He could not give his life for anyone. He had already given his life to sin. Only the sinless would be able to give their life for someone else. Therefore, when Jesus ascended the cross of Calvary He had to be innocent. He had to be pure. That required that He spend His entire life in total consecration and devotion to God. In other words, He had to fulfill the typology and symbolism of the continual burnt offering. Never one time in His life did He let the fires of His consecration, sanctification and devotion to God terminate. That made Him a sinless sacrifice. When He went to the cross, God made Him a sinless sacrifice. When He went to the cross, God was able to place man's sin and performance on Him and treat Him as though it were His performance, punish Him as though He had committed those sins and trespasses. Then God could take Christ's performance which was flawless and perfect and lay it upon men of obedient faith and treat them as though Christ's performance were theirs. That is the reason God is able to see the Christian today as sinless under the blood of Calvary.

Having offered atonement, man needed someone to present him to God as a first fruit of Jesus' sacrificial offering. Jesus did that in the grain offering. Then man needed someone to restore the relationship of peace and confidence that he once had with God. Man can thus be restored to fellowship with God and enjoy the harmony of peace. Man and God can now share the festive banquet of all spiritual good in the kingdom of Jesus Christ because Jesus was man's peace offering. The banquet table, the marriage feast of the Lamb, is now enjoyed in peace with God (Revelation 19:9).

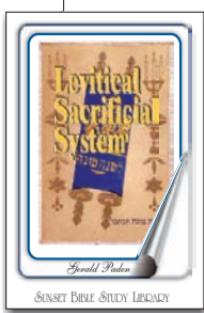
All of these sacrificial typologies find perfect fulfillment in Jesus Christ. So also do the functions of the High Priest; Aaron foreshadowed the High Priestly functions of Christ. All this in its fulfillment was necessary for man's initial and continued salvation from sin. Jesus saved the faithful obedient, and He keeps them saved! "*Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!*" (2 Corinthians 9:15)

# Gerald Paden



Gerald Paden was educated at Abilene Christian University (B.S.) and subsequently served as a missionary in Italy for 18 years and still has a great interest in the evangelization of that country. Gerald specializes in *Church Growth Studies*. He teaches *Sacrificial System*, *Hebrews*, and *The Epistles of John* in the Sunset School of Preaching. He teaches in the Missions School and is instrumental in motivating families to go the Mission field. Gerald has a lovely wife, Bobbie, and three children.

Gerald has rich contributions to your study. He will constantly exalt Christ as the fulfillment of all the Old Testament sacrifices. He will also emphasize the necessity of living a holy life. You will see his long years of mission work in Italy, years of instructing preaching students and seminar work among churches in most of the United States and in many nations being reflected in this study guide and in the video tapes.



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