

## 2. Burnt Offering – a complete devotion

January 15, 2009

We need to think through the origin of the sacrifices that are mentioned in Leviticus. Until Adam and Eve sinned against God, human had a picture perfect relationship with God. Once the sin was committed by the first man and woman, holy and righteous God had to do something about these two sinful human beings. Since our sin brings the consequence of death to us according to Roman 6:23, the first man, Adam had to die for their sins in paradise.

But our merciful God killed an animal on behalf of them and covered their nakedness – their sins – with the animal's skin. I am sure that it was horrifying for them to see the blood of the animal spilled onto the ground for their sins. That was the beginning of the sacrifice and offering.

However, the oldest offering known to man is the burnt offering which is mentioned in chapter 1. It was the offering of Abel, Noah and Abraham. All the offerings were made on the brazen altar but because the burnt offering was made there, the brazen altar is also called the burnt altar in the Tabernacle.

This offering is recorded first of the five offerings because of its prominence and priority. This offering is a picture of Christ in depth as well as in death. The burnt offering shows the person of Christ. He is our substitute.

*Ephesians 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*

### A. THE RIGHT SACRIFICE FOR THE BURNT OFFERING

*Leviticus 1:1 Now the Lord called to Moses, and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When any one of you brings an offering to the Lord, you shall bring your offering of the livestock--of the herd and of the flock. 3 'If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord.*

Several types of animals were used for the burnt offering. Animals of the herd are cattle and of the flock are sheep or doves or pigeons. Wild animals or road kills were excluded. Animals that live by slaying other animals could never reveal the reason for Christ, who came to give His life a ransom for many. Only that which was valuable and dear to the owner could be offered because it symbolizes Christ. God spared not His own Son. Christ suffered on the cross, and the Father suffered in heaven.

#### 1) A male without blemish

The sacrifice is to be a male that speaks of strength. It speaks of the fact that the Lord Jesus is mighty to save, and that He is able to save to the entire human race. Then, the sacrifice was to be without blemish which means the animal was to be ideally perfect. This speaks of the perfections of Christ.

*2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

In the Gospels we find that when He died, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. It was His death which opened the way to God. It was His death which saves the sinners. Our own sinfulness shuts us out from God's presence and

holiness. Through the sacrificial death of Jesus, God symbolically tore the veil of the temple to let the people come into the Holy of Holies.

The animal must not have any obvious defect. God would not accept a defective sacrifice. We have a tendency to always want to give God “second best” – if not our third or fourth best. Yet this principle shows that God would not receive a sacrifice marked by defect or even left-overs.

You might have heard a story of the farmer whose cow gave birth to twins, and he swore he would give one of the calves to God. He didn’t decide which one to give to God, until one day one of the calves died. He said to his wife: “Guess what? God’s calf died today!”

If we bring the leftover to the Lord, that should not be called sacrifice or offering. It should be called, “cleaning the spiritual pantry.” Here is the excellent example by king David:

*2 Samuel 24:24, Then the king said to Araunah, “No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.*

But the rest of Israel did not always live up to this standard, either. Much later the Prophet Malachi rebuked Israel for offering God sub-standard sacrifices:

*Malachi 1:8 And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?” Says the Lord of hosts.*

Jesus fulfilled this standard perfectly, being a sinless and pure sacrifice without blemish.

*1 Peter 1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

## **2) His own free will**

God did not want a forced sacrifice. Each animal had to be freely offered. What God really wants from us is not actual sacrificial materials, but our hearts and obedience. No draft system, only voluntary. Otherwise, it would be meaningless.

## **3) At the door of the tabernacle of meeting**

This is another important principle. The Israelites couldn’t offer the sacrifice anywhere else. This was to keep Israel from idolatry. They were prone to lapse into idolatry again and again, and finally their idolatry was the reason for the Babylonian captivity. And this, by the way, has a message for us. It is to keep us from presuming that we can come to God our way, on our terms. God makes the terms.

*John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

## **B. THE TRANSFERENCE OF GUILT**

*Leviticus 1:4 Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.*

This was a clear picture of identification with the sacrificial victim. Through this symbol, the guilty one transferred his guilt to the sacrificial victim that would die for the sin of the offerer.

It was not enough that the victim merely died. The one receiving atonement had to actively identify himself with the sacrifice. In the same way, it is not enough to know that Jesus died for the sins of the world. The one who would receive His atonement must “reach out” and identify himself with Jesus.

There is a difference between the Old Testament idea of atonement and the New Testament idea. In the Old Testament, sin is “covered over” until redemption was completed by Jesus on the cross. In the New Testament, sin is done away with – and a true “atonement” was accomplished by Jesus’ sacrifice.

Significantly, the burnt offering was more about total surrender to God than about sin. Yet this shows that when we come to God with total surrender, we sure realize we must deal with sin.

### **C. THE PROCEDURE OF THE BURNT OFFERING**

*Leviticus 1:5-9 He shall kill the bull before the Lord; and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 6 And he shall skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces. 7 The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay the wood in order on the fire. 8 Then the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that is on the fire upon the altar; 9 but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.*

It seems as though the one who brought the offering – who laid his hands on the head of the bull – was the same one expected to actually kill the animal.

Of course, the priest would assist as necessary, and the priests would do the heavy work of skinning and cutting the animal up. But the one who brought the offering delivered the deathblow. The individual Israelite cut the jugular vein of the bull, in the presence of the priests at the Tabernacle of Meeting. This was a solemn testimony to the need for sacrifice.

We must not forget that it was not the Roman soldiers or the Pharisees or satan for that matter who killed Jesus, but it was you and me. We brought the deathblow to our Savior.

Everything had to be done decently and in order. God is not the author of confusion. The offering was to be cut into pieces so that it might be exposed and so it could be more easily consumed by the fire. The inner life of the Lord Jesus has been open for inspection for almost 2000 years. He has been examined more than any other person. There is more disagreement concerning Him than anyone else.

This was true at the time He lived and it is still true today. He still asks the question, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” There are all kinds of opinions today and some of them are blasphemous. Depending on each individual’s answer, each individual decides his or her own eternal destiny, not according to what they claim.

The rest of the animal, having been washed from any excrement or impurity, was burnt on the altar. The totality of the offering, burnt before God, was a sweet aroma before God’s throne.

This reflects the heart behind the burnt offering. It was a desire to give everything to God, an "I surrender all" attitude. When everything was burnt before the Lord on the altar, there was nothing held back. This was not a "do your own thing" matter. You had to bring your offering the way God wants you to.

We are going to skip v10-13 because the procedure was essentially the same as that for offering a bull, except that a sheep or a goat was not skinned. Since the entire animal was to be burned, only the impurities of the entrails had to be washed before the sacrifice was burnt.

#### **D. THE PROCEDURE FOR BIRDS AS A BURNT OFFERING**

*Leviticus 1:14-17 'And if the burnt sacrifice of his offering to the Lord is of birds, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves or young pigeons. 15 The priest shall bring it to the altar, wring off its head, and burn it on the altar; its blood shall be drained out at the side of the altar. 16 And he shall remove its crop with its feathers and cast it beside the altar on the east side, into the place for ashes. 17 Then he shall split it at its wings, but shall not divide it completely; and the priest shall burn it on the altar, on the wood that is on the fire. It is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.*

Poverty was no excuse for not bringing an offering to God. A bird could be substituted for an animal. Anyone could have a bird and offer it.

Did you notice that when our Lord Jesus was born, His parents offered turtledoves? His parents were poor unlike what the prosperity gospel Bible teachers claimed. According to them Jesus' parents were rich and Jesus was rich because they were carpenters. Not according to the Bible. They say this kind of off-the-Bible, stupid things to justify their heretic doctrines.

#### **E. APPLICATIONS**

- 1) Whenever we do something for the Lord or do something in His name, we must do everything with our best, not half-hearted.
- 2) God doesn't want our materialistic-only or half-hearted dedication, rather a total obedience like Jesus did to the Father.
- 3) No one is excluded from serving God – healthy, sickly, rich, poor, young, old, smart and not so smart. It is up to us to serve Him and live for Him. Those who choose not to serve the Lord are missing out on blessings from the Lord by their own choice.