

4. Sin Offering

January 29, 2009

Recent nightly news programs are filled with pretty much three categories:

1. More new presidential policies and Congress and Senate bills that are completely against the Word of God
2. The terrible economy and more financial bailouts without limit
3. Illinois governor Blagojevich's more mischief until he gets kicked out

What appals me about Blagojevich is that he is still arguing that he can beat the impeachment by the State lawmakers with some technicalities. He couldn't argue about the truth of the contents of the recorded conversation in his own voice by the feds, but he wanted to drag the whole thing through mud just to retain his position as a governor.

It seems that the American politicians no longer care about doing what is right and fighting against what is wrong. As long as they get to keep power so that they can be famous and rich, that is all they care.

The reason why people are this way is that they don't mind about sinning against God and going against truth.

But to our holy God, right is right and wrong is wrong without any exception or technicality. That is why He told Moses about sin offering that was explained in Leviticus chapter 4.

The first three offerings set forth the person of Christ in all of His glorious character. The two offerings set forth the work of Christ on the cross for our sins. The sin offering speaks of sin as a nature. Man is a sinner by nature, and he is a sinner because of what he does.

A. WHAT IS SIN OFFERING?

Leviticus 4:1-2 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a person sins unintentionally against any of the commandments of the Lord in anything which ought not to be done, and does any of them,'

There are several features of the sin offerings set it apart from the other offerings and distinguish its importance:

1) It was entirely a new offering.

Up to this time, no heathen nation had anything that was even similar to it. Why did other heathen nations have no sin offering? It is because to their heathen religions, practically nothing is sin.

Do you know Las Vegas has one of the lowest crime rates among the over 1 million people population? You know why? Because in that Sin City Vegas, just about everything is lawful.

2) From the time of the giving of the Law, it became the most important and significant offering.

Man was a sinner before the giving of the Law, but actually it was the Law which revealed to him that he was a sinner. The sin offering was offered during all of the Jewish feasts – Passover, Pentecost, Trumpets and Tabernacles.

3) It is in contrast to the burnt offering, although it was made in the same place.

Where the burnt offering leaves off, the sin offering begins.

The burnt offering tells who Christ is; the sin offering tells what Christ did.

In the burnt offering Christ meets the demands of God's high and holy standard; in the sin offering Christ meets the deep and desperate needs of man.

In the burnt offering we see the preciousness of Christ; in the sin offering we see the hatefulness of sin.

The burnt offering was a voluntary offering; the sin offering was commanded.

In Genesis 2, we find that God told Adam and Eve not to eat the fruits from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden.

Genesis 2:16-17 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

The Holy Spirit asked me a couple of days ago, "Why is it called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Why not just the tree of the knowledge of evil?" Then the Lord answered Himself for me, "It is because without knowing good through our conscience, you would not know that you are sinning." Even the most cruel hardened sinners still know that when they sin.

What does it mean, "*a person sins unintentionally against any of the commandments of the Lord in anything*"? It doesn't mean that the sinners were ignorant of the law, but that they were ignorant of having violated the law. Ignorance doesn't excuse or cancel guilt. Once a person's sin is known, it has to be confessed and dealt with.

Sins of ignorance reveal the underlying truth that man is a sinner by nature. We are a sinner whether we know it or not. Religion is men's desperate effort of their own justification – reconciling with God. The problem is that we are not holy enough to get to God. God is too holy for Him to defile Himself. There had to be a mediator who had to build a bridge between God and mankind.

The sin offering gave a profound conviction of sin. If you were there and laid your hand on an animal's head which you were about to slay on your behalf so that your sins would be covered until next time, it would jolt your heart. Especially when blood pours out from a dying animal. That is the result of our sins. Instead of our blood gushing out, our Savior Jesus' blood did so that we may live eternally.

What about the people who intentionally and willfully sin against God? There was no atonement available for the one whose heart was so defiantly turned against the Lord in presumptuous sin. If a person's heart wasn't turned towards the Lord, then all the animals in the world sacrificed on his behalf did no good to that person.

For those who willfully and intentionally reject the saving grace of Jesus Christ, there is not a thing anyone can do after their final breath.

Until we came to know Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we didn't realize that we were lost. As usual we continued in our sins until He showed us how wretched we were. At that moment we had a choice to make – to follow Jesus and be cleansed from our sins or to continue in our sinful lives and eternally condemned by our choices.

B. THE SIN OFFERING OF A PRIEST

Leviticus 4:3-12 if the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer to the Lord for his sin which he has sinned a young bull without blemish as a sin offering. 4 He shall bring the bull to the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord, lay his hand on the bull's head, and kill the bull before the Lord. 5 Then the anointed priest shall take some of the bull's blood and bring it to the tabernacle of meeting. 6 The priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the Lord, in front of the veil of the sanctuary. 7 And the priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord, which is in the tabernacle of meeting; and he shall pour the remaining blood of the bull at the base of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 8 He shall take from it all the fat of the bull as the sin offering. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat which is on the entrails, 9 the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove, 10 as it was taken from the bull of the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn them on the altar of the burnt offering. 11 But the bull's hide and all its flesh, with its head and legs, its entrails and offal-- 12 the whole bull he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned.

The sin of the priest is mentioned first, because he stood in the place of leadership. He was to bring a young bull, the most valuable animal of all, as his offering. The position of the one who sinned determined the type of animal for the sin sacrifice. His sin was no different, but his responsibility was greater.

It is still the same today. Pastors and ministry leaders should hold themselves to a higher standard than the rest of the congregation. When we do something wrong in the sight of God, our bad examples give excuses to the carnal and immature followers to sin.

James 3:1 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

Privilege and position carry with its responsibilities, and God Himself will hold us to that.

I asked you to underline v6 and 7. What is the reason for sprinkling the blood and putting the blood on the horns of the altar of sweet incense? Here is why:

- 1) Sin is an offense against the holiness of God, because the veil guarding His holy presence must receive sacrificial blood.
- 2) Sin affects our prayer life, because the altar of incense representing the prayers of God's people must receive sacrificial blood.
- 3) Sin makes our atonement necessary, because the altar of the burnt offering – the place of atonement – must receive sacrificial blood.

V11-12 give us an interesting twist no other offerings mentioned. What do they signify? Remember when I was introducing this Book, I said that you can not understand Leviticus without studying the Book of Hebrews? We can find the reason for these verses in the 13th chapter of the Book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 13:11-12 For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. 12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

C. OTHERS' SIN OFFERINGS

In v13-21 we find the sin offering for the congregation. Here is another lesson we need to learn. There is not only an individual responsibility before God but there is also a corporate responsibility. God judges nations, and many people who didn't participate in the sin of the nation are judged along with it.

When the people of Israel rejected Jesus as their Messiah, the whole nation was judged. When the Roman Empire rejected Christianity, this influential civilization and empire went down the tube. Now America is doing everything to reject God from every single part of the nation. Yes, God will reject her, that is not a matter of 'if', rather it is a matter of 'when'.

All of us have friends who attend liberal churches where they don't teach and follow the truth from the Bible. When God judges those liberal churches, our friends' lives will be affected by it, because they chose to be in the liberal settings.

In v22-26 it mentions about the sin offering for a ruler who sinned. He should offer a kid of the goats, a male without blemish.

In v27-35 we find the same procedure for a ruler of the people, except that a female goat or a lamb could be offered instead of a male goat.

Religion can never satisfy the heart or meet the requirements of a God who is holy. Only the death of Christ on the cross can give us forgiveness of sins. We are sinners by nature and we are not fit for heaven.

The important thing for us to understand is that when Christ forgives us our sins, He also cleanses us from all unrighteousness. There is nothing more to be said about it. He has put our sins in the bottom of the sea. He has removed it as far as the east is from the west. He has removed it so that He will not even remember it. He settles the sin question. That rids us of our guilt complexes. We don't need to ever wonder whether He has really forgiven us. He took away all our sins and guilt. All of it.

D. APPLICATIONS

1) We should never take our sins, any sin, lightly.

Each one of our sins was dumped on our Savior's heart while He was hanging on the cross for us.

2) We should never listen to satan's lies, especially, that God would not forgive our sins.

The only sin our God would not forgive is rejecting Jesus until our last breath.