

On the Hebrew calendar one day stood out as the most important of the year. It was the Day of Atonement - the one day each year that the High

Priest could go behind the veil into the Tabernacle's Holy of Holies. It was the one occasion where man was allowed to enter God's presence and make atonement for his sin.

On that day the High Priest would take two kid goats to the entrance of the Tabernacle. There he would cast lots. One goat was selected for sacrifice - you might say, "*the Lord got His goat*". The other goat became the scapegoat.

After slaughtering the sacrifice the High Priest took fire off the altar. He put the coals in a censer, and burned incense. The smoke rose and formed a cloud that shielded Him from the full brunt of God's glory. We're told in verse 13, without the sunglasses of smoke he would've died - God's holiness would've burned him up.

In the Holy of Holies his job was to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice on the lid of the Ark, the mercyseat. As the Priest worked inside, the people waited outside with eager anticipation.

When he finally appeared it was proof God had accepted their sacrifice. The whole congregation of Israel would breathe a collective sigh of relief. The people were assured their sin had been forgiven for another year.

But then the priest would take the scapegoat, lay his hands on its head, and confess over it all the sins of the past year. He would then turn the goat loose into the wilderness. In later years it was led out a Sabbath day's distance then turned loose. Still later it was taken 12 miles. Even later the goat was led over a cliff.

Jewish tradition says a crimson sash was tied to the Tabernacle door. After the goat was led

THE SCAPEGOAT

Leviticus 16

away it turned white - a symbol of God's pardon. It's interesting, that according to the Midrash for the 40 years after the Jews

rejected Jesus the ribbon stayed red. When they crucified Jesus they rejected God's only provision of sin.

Verse 22 tells us, "*The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.*" It was the "*scapegoat*" and not the "*scapelamb*", because a goat would wander away, never to return. The nation's sin was not only *forgiven*, but it was *forgotten*. God sent it away. He dismisses it entirely. He'll never bring it up again.

It all reminds me of the pastor who was tormented by a past indiscretion early in his ministry. No one knew about it but himself. He had confessed his sin countless times, yet he could never rid his conscience of the guilt.

At the time there was a very spiritual lady in the church. She kept saying that God had told her this and that. The pastor thought it was a little presumptuous for a person to claim that God speaks to them personally. He decided to put the lady in her place. One day, she made the comment that God had told her. The pastor said, "*If God speaks to you, ask him to reveal to you the sin I committed early in my ministry.*" She said she would. A few weeks later he asked, "*Did God tell you?*" She replied, "*No He didn't. God said He doesn't remember it anymore.*"

Jesus is not just our sacrifice - He's our scapegoat. Psalm 103:12 says, "*As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.*"

The sin offering and trespass offering were very similar. Leviticus 7:7 tells us, "*The trespass offering is like the sin offering; there is one law for them both...*"

The Hebrew word translated "*sin*" means "*to miss the mark*". We sin when we try to please God, and fall short - whereas a "*trespass*" is a "*deliberate act of rebellion*". We trespass when we cross a boundary God has established.

In Leviticus 5-6 it seems that trespass offerings were associated with crimes against other people. Along with the sacrifice, restitution was paid to the victim. It was not enough to gain God's

THE SIN OFFERING

forgiveness. The damage also had to be repaired.

When you couple the first and last two sacrifices - the burnt offering and the sin or trespass offering you get a picture of the work of Christ. The cross has an effect in heaven and on earth. In heaven, the sacrifice of Jesus satisfies the demands of a holy God. On earth, His sacrifice cleanses the heart of a wretched sinner. It's both judicial and effectual. It pleases God and it cleanses sin. It cleans up my record and my heart. It makes me right with God, eternally - and makes my heart righteous, internally.

SACRIFICE

Leviticus 17:11 tells us, *“it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.”*

The book of Hebrews puts it (9:22), *“without shedding of blood there is no remission.”*

Forgiveness requires a blood sacrifice.

When Adam and Eve sinned they tried to cover their guilt with fig leaves – but their fruit of the looms wouldn't do. God replaced them with animal skins. From the very beginning God covered their sin with a sacrifice. The wages of sin is death!

In Leviticus God categorizes and codifies how the various sacrifices are to be offered. The word *“Leviticus”* means *“pertaining to the Levites”* – and the tribe of Levi were the people God chose to carry out the various offerings or sacrifices.

The first 7 chapters of Leviticus describe 5 sacrifices: *the burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering, sin offering, and trespass offering...* And note upfront the relevance of these sacrifices for you and me... they all speak to us of the Savior.

Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice. His death put an end to all sin. After Jesus was crucified in 32 AD, there was no longer any need for the animal sacrifices. As far as God was concerned, the Levitical system shut down.

As practical instruction, the book of Leviticus is in many ways obsolete – but as a picture of the sacrifice of Christ it is still invaluable. Each detail of these sacrifices point us to various aspects of the work of Jesus on our behalf. It's a rich book.

In Leviticus 1:3 we read, *“If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; (Jesus was certainly a male without blemish.) he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD. 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.”* (Here's the principle of transference, or substitution – the death of one on behalf of another.)

It reminds me of a picture in the Chicago Sun Times several years ago. A couple were sitting at a table kissing. The caption read, *“Roderick Hinson gets a smack from Jacqueline Nash, after he served her three-day jail sentence for possession of an unregistered gun.”* Jacqueline had failed to register a handgun – so Hinson served his girlfriend's sentence. The judge allowed the substitution.

God also allows substitutions. When a person confessed their sin over the lamb, it became their substitute. The lamb died in their place. This is the mechanics of salvation. When we confess Jesus as Lord, He also becomes our substitute.

In verse 4 the word *“atonement”*. It's the Hebrew word *“kaphar”* which means *“covering”*. When Adam and Eve sinned they realized they were naked. Their innocence was shattered. Suddenly, they were overwhelmed with a sense of lack, guilt, inadequacy, insufficiency. Their reaction was to cover-up.

It's interesting, though animals and birds provide their own clothing – man does not. He has no feathers or fur. He has to look outside of himself for a covering.

The Old Testament sacrifices were a temporary covering for sin. God accepted the sacrifices, but eventually, they had to be repeated. Old Testament sacrifices produced a *probation*. You were spared until the sacrifice came due again. But the sacrifice of Jesus is a *permanent pardon*. In Christ we're forgiven once-for-all!

We're told in verse 5, *“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...”*

Imagine picking out an animal from your small herd. You were there when this little lamb was born. You probably gave him a name. You watched him learn to walk, and frolic in the grass. This lamb has been like a pet to you.

But lately, you've done some goofy stuff – you know you've sinned. You've been told God isn't very happy, and to avoid His judgment you need to offer a sacrifice. So you put a leash on little Rover, and walk him to the Tabernacle. You lay your hand on his head – and after confessing your sin, the priest hands you a butcher knife. You gulp hard, and in one bold stroke you slit the little lamb's throat.

Up until now you've known intellectually that the wages of sin is death. But now you're watching this lamb squirm in pain, then slump over in a motionless heap. You hear it scream, then whimper, then gasp it's last. You smell the stench of blood as the priest drains it into a saucer. Suddenly, what you knew in your head has now impacted you on an emotional level. Your little lamb is now lamb chops!

And you walk away thinking, *“Wow, my sin sent my precious, innocent little lamb to the slaughter.”* You realize sin is serious, and forgiveness is expensive.

Today, when we come to worship God we walk into a sanitized sanctuary. The sights and sounds and smells are pleasant. But when you came to the Old Testament Tabernacle to worship, it was like walking into the meat market at Kroger – or better yet, a slaughterhouse. Blood is splattered everywhere. Death is all around. Rather than praise songs you hear the screams of animals in their final throes.

Guys, walk by the Old Testament Tabernacle and it looked like the scene of a drive-by shooting. It was a bloody mess. As one author put it, *“The Old Testament sacrificial system... was a gory affair indeed! During the thousand-plus years of the Old Covenant, there were more than a million animal sacrifices. So considering that each bull's sacrifice spilled a gallon or two of blood, and each goat a quart, the Old Covenant truly rested on a sea of blood.”*

For 1500 years God drilled His people on the severity of sin – the necessity of a sacrifice – and the need for a Savior. This is why when John the Baptist saw Jesus and shouted, *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* – everyone who heard him should've understood the implications of his statement.

Devotion Box - Jesus and the Burnt Offering

Leviticus 1:7 says the burnt offering was taken by the priests, and laid on wood over a fire. The body of Jesus was laid on a cross of wood. Verse 11 says the burnt sacrifice was killed on the north side of the altar. Mount Calvary was located north of the Temple site. Verse 15 tells us the blood of the sacrifice was drained from the side of the altar – and from the side of Jesus out came blood and water. In Leviticus 6:11 we're told the ashes from the burnt sacrifice were taken outside the camp. Hebrews 13:12 picks up on this detail, and tells us this is why Jesus was crucified outside the gate of Jerusalem.

MORAL & CEREMONIAL

Leviticus 15:18 tells us, “*When a woman lies with a man, and there is an emission of semen, they shall bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.*” This is a normal, healthy – even sacred - sexual encounter between a husband and wife, yet the couple is considered “*unclean*” until evening.

Here is where it’s important in our study of the Mosaic Law not to confuse *ceremonial uncleanness* with *moral uncleanness*. There is nothing *morally* wrong with a husband and wife having sex (Hebrews 13:4 tells us that the marriage bed is undefiled.) - but *ceremonially* the act produced a temporary uncleanness.

Moral verdicts of clean or unclean were based on the good or evil intrinsic to the act. But ceremonial verdicts were based on symbolism. Nothing is morally impure about marital sex, but when the Hebrews thought of human reproduction God wanted them to recall that sin has poisoned the fountain of life.

Ceremonially, they were unclean - at least, long enough to remember the bigger spiritual picture.

CLEAN & UNCLEAN

God instituted this notion of clean and unclean for spiritual reasons. Man is a consumer by nature – we feed our bodies, and our souls. And just as some of the foods the Israelites ate were deemed clean, and some unclean - likewise, some of the movies and music and books you feed your soul are clean - and some are unclean.

The ol’ computer adage is true, *garbage in garbage out*. Take in trash, and you’ll end up trash. The health food advocate says, “*You are what you eat!*” – that’s why my friends call me *Twinkie*. But the truth also applies to us spiritually.

Moses taught the Hebrews if they ate an unclean food or touched an unclean object it made them unclean – and thus, unfit for the worship or service of God. The same truth applies to us. Consume unclean material – or dwell on unclean stimuli – and you become unclean or unfit for the worship or service of God.

Don’t be like the guy who complained there was too much sex and violence on his VCR. You can take control over what you take in!

If you want to be useful and effective for God... set yourself apart. Reserve your mind and soul for His input and influence. Leviticus 11:44 is the key, “*sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy.*”

PROFANE FIRE

Nadab and Abihu became *crispy critters*. Moses tells us these priests got burned because they offered “*profane fire*” or “*strange fire*”. Exactly what happened we’re not sure. There are different theories.

Did they enter the Holy of Holies which was off limits to all but the High Priest? Did they get the fire from a source other than the bronze altar? Was it a matter of timing - the right act at the wrong time? Was it a right act done from the wrong motive: pride, jealousy, self-glory. Verse 9 prohibits the priests from drinking wine while offering the sacrifices - it could they have been drunk when they went before the Lord?

Here’s what we know happened. Nadab and Abihu just witnessed the Tabernacle’s dedication, and the awesome manifestation of God. Moses and Aaron go in to the Lord, and fire falls from heaven. Talk about excitement, exhilaration! These guys are fired-up, literally – they’re on fire for God - and they want in on the action – so they rush in before the Lord in a profane manner.

Guys, this can happen to us. We can get so caught up in the emotion of the moment we stop thinking – we worship God in ways that don’t please Him. This often happens in Charismatic circles. Well-meaning folks get whipped up into a frenzy, then approach God in unbiblical ways, and from ungodly motives - profane fire! Guys, you can be fired-up for God to a fault – just ask Nadab and Abihu. When it comes to Christian ministry the ends never justifies the means. It’s not enough to just worship God – you need to worship Him in the way that He desires. Henrietta Mears once wrote, “*We need to learn to walk softly in the Divine Presence.*”

Leviticus 8 describes the dedication of the High Priest and his sons. There were six steps:

- 1) they washed with water
- 2) they put on their priestly garments
- 3) they were anointed with oil
- 4) the right ear, right thumb, right toe were dipped in blood
- 5) they ate the priestly portion
- 6) they waited at the door.

These are also steps to victorious Christian living:

Devotion Box - Be an Overcomer

- 1) wash your mind in the water of God’s Word. Study your Bible and build your faith.
- 2) put on Christ, and see yourself as a child of God.
- 3) be anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit.
- 4) dedicate your ear to hear God’s Word, your thumb to do God’s will, your toe to walk in God’s ways.
- 5) feed on fellowship with God.
- 6) learn to wait on God.

Bible Scan - Leviticus 1-22

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - sandyadams@calvarychapel.org

Calvary Chapel Announcements - October 24, 1999

Ladies Night Out - next Monday, October 25, at 6:45 pm - "Pizza, Fun, and Service to be done."

Horizons (Fellowship for young adults) - October 29, 7:30 - call Pastor Randy for details

Men's Prayer Breakfast - Saturday, October 30, at 7:30 am.

Candy Donations are being accepted for our 10/31 Children's Ministry

Please pray for our fact-finding trip to Haiti. Sandy and Kevin will be gone November 15-19.

For more info on all the Calvary Chapel activities pick up a *Communicator* in the foyer

Next Bible Scan - October 31 - Leviticus 23-27

"...for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul."
- Leviticus 17:11

Bible Scan Memory Verse

Devotion Box - Grain Offering

The grain offering was the only bloodless sacrifice. It spoke of service, not forgiveness of sin. Our good works are impotent to save us. "*Being good will keep you out of jail, but it certainly won't keep you out of hell.*" Salvation is the result of a blood sacrifice - not a grain offering.

Yet once we're forgiven, we'll want to serve the Lord. The desire of our heart will be to present to Jesus the fruit of our service.

But notice, the grain offering is prepared with oil. The oil is mixed with the grain in one of three ways: it's fried in oil - mixed with oil and baked - cooked, then covered with oil. The symbolism here is significant.

Oil is a biblical idiom for the Holy Spirit, and there are three experiences we can have with the Spirit. He is with us before we're saved - we're frying *with* the oil. He comes to dwell in us when we're saved - the oil is mixed *in* the grain. And after we're saved the Spirit anoints us, or comes upon us with power - the oil is poured out *upon* the grain.

Guys, whenever we serve in Jesus' name, God wants us to do so under the influence and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Are you filled and saturated with the Spirit?

DEVILISH DECEPTIONS

Leviticus 19:26 forbids any form of divination. Divination is any attempt to link up with the spiritual realm through means apart from direct communication with God or His Word. Ouiji boards, horoscopes, palm-readers, new age channel-

ers, séances, crystal balls, imaging, psychic healing - are all elements of the occult and forbidden by God. Participate in these practices, and you invite Satan to use his deceptions.

Verse 31 also forbids consulting a medium. Any attempt at communicating with the dead is forbidden. What you think is the dead person is in reality a demon. Beware!

Devotion Box - Peace Offering

The peace offering spoke of fellowship and communion with God. All the burnt offering was sacrificed to God, but with the peace offering only the fat was laid on the altar. In Scripture the fat is a symbol of abundance.

God knows you have a demanding job... you work long hours... you have bills to pay... but what about the abundance of your time, and effort, and money?

Hey, notice 3:14, "*all the fat is the Lord's.*" Are you willing to take the surplus and spend it on the Lord? Does the Lord possess your fat - your extra?

THE BIBLE ON HOMOSEXUALITY...

Leviticus 18:22 says clearly, "*You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.*" "Abomination" means "*disgusting or revolting*". The Bible is not ambiguous here. There is no confusion on this issue. Homosexuality is not merely a sin, but an abomination in the sight of the Lord.

God loves the sinner, and that includes the homosexual, but He hates the sin. If a homosexual wants to know God he or she has to repent of their sinful lifestyle.