

# THE GOSPEL PROJECT – CHRONOLOGICAL GOD DELIVERS GOD THE LAWGIVER

## *Atonement Sacrifices (Part 2)*

It was not easy for Israel to learn God’s ways and become set apart from the pagan world around them. Leviticus gives directions for the ceremonies and worship practices within the Old Testament system. The people had to learn the implications of living with their holy God in their midst. The same is true for us today. When a person accepts Christ as Savior, God’s Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us. Hopefully, these studies will remind us of His nearness. The knowledge of His Presence should bring us comfort and fill us with a healthy dread of grieving His Holy Spirit.

Last week we looked at voluntary sacrifices of the Old Testament (see #1-3 on chart). Today, we conclude with the mandatory sacrifices: (4) the sin offering, and (5) the trespass offering.

One offering not included in the five offerings is the drink offering. It was a supplement to the regular sacrifices and was poured out on the altar as the sacrifice was burning. The first recorded occurrence of a drink offering was given by Jacob in *Genesis 35:14*, right after God changed his name to Israel. Later the drink offerings



were included with the burnt and grain (meal) offerings in the sacrifices God ordained. It was never added to the sin offering or the trespass offering. They would bring in a skin of wine and just pour it on the sacrifice which was being consumed by fire. The drink offering would go up in steam and disappear. Centuries later when the Apostle Paul was facing execution, he considered his life to be a drink offering poured out to God. *Philippians 2:17 (ESV)* <sup>17</sup> *Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.* The drink offering was added to the morning and evening sacrifices. And this brings us to the question that came up in class last week “how frequently were the offerings made?”

**Read Exodus 29:38-42 (ESV)** <sup>38</sup> “Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs a year old day by day regularly. <sup>39</sup> One lamb you shall offer in the **morning**, and the other lamb you shall offer at **twilight**. <sup>40</sup> And with the first lamb a tenth measure of fine flour mingled with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and a fourth of a hin of wine for a **drink offering**. <sup>41</sup> The other lamb you shall offer at twilight, and shall offer with it a grain offering and its drink offering, as in the morning, for a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the LORD. <sup>42</sup> It shall be a regular burnt offering throughout your generations at the entrance of the tent of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet with you, to speak to you there.

Each day would begin with the priests sacrificing a lamb as a burnt offering, picturing total dedication to God, and the day ended with the offering of a second lamb as a burnt offering. This is a good example for us to follow, that is beginning and ending our day with surrender to the Lord. Notice that a grain offering and a drink offering were both offered with the morning and twilight sacrifices. By the way, there were double burnt offerings on the Sabbath. (**Numbers 28:9**)

In **Numbers 28:11**, we find that monthly sacrifices were to be made. **Numbers 28-29** reveals that sacrificial offerings were also to be made during Passover, the Feast of Weeks, the Feasts of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. From this brief overview regarding the frequency of sacrifices, we realize that the shedding of blood was continuous and unending. This reminds me of the words of an old hymn, “what can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus!”

Let’s continue now with our final two offerings.

Offering 3 – The Sin Offering – We need atonement to purify our hearts.

**Read Leviticus 5:1-6 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> “If anyone sins in that he hears a public adjuration to testify, and though he is a witness, whether he has seen or come to know the matter, yet does not speak, he shall bear his iniquity; <sup>2</sup> or if anyone touches an unclean thing, whether a carcass of an unclean wild animal or a carcass of unclean livestock or a carcass of unclean swarming things, and it is hidden from him and he has become unclean, and he realizes his guilt; <sup>3</sup> or if he touches human uncleanness, of whatever sort the uncleanness may be... when he comes to know it, and realizes his guilt; <sup>4</sup> or if anyone utters with his lips a rash oath to do evil or to do good, any sort of rash oath that people swear, and it is hidden from him, when he comes to know it, and he realizes his guilt in any of these; <sup>5</sup> when he realizes his guilt in any of these and confesses the sin he has committed, <sup>6</sup> he shall bring to the LORD as his compensation for the sin that he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat, for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin.

The four sins listed in the above passage are just examples. Once a sin becomes known to us, it has to be confessed. David prayed in **Psalms 19:12 (NASB)** <sup>12</sup> *Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults.*

Verse 1 mentions a witness who has seen or knows something, but withholds the truth to someone else’s detriment – that is a sin of omission. A New Testament parallel to sins of omission is **James 4:17 (ESV)** <sup>17</sup> *So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.*

Verses 2 and 3 speak to uncleanness. Although this was not open defiance against God, it most likely related to physical health as well as spiritual health reasons in those times. In our times exposure to the vile things of our world can quickly cause us to become unhealthy spiritually. **Hebrews 10:22 (ESV)** <sup>22</sup> *let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

Verse 4 is an example of careless speech – more specifically saying we will do something and then failing to do it. Jesus said in **Matthew 5:37 (ESV)** <sup>37</sup> *Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.*

Verse 5 is very significant: *he realizes his guilt in any of these and confesses the sin he has committed. I John 1:9 (ESV)* <sup>9</sup> *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

I am not sure if the sin offering was burned outside the camp in every instance. But I do know that when the sin offering was made for the sins of the priest, it was carried outside the camp and burned. **Leviticus 4:12**. The sin offering was also burned outside the camp when the offering was being made for unintentional sins of the entire congregation. **Leviticus 4:21**.

It was the sin offering that was made on the Day of Atonement. The Hebrew word kapar translated as atonement means “to ransom, to remove by paying a price.” Having bathed and dressed in white linen garments, the High Priest brought forward a young bullock for a sin offering, purchased at his own cost and two young goats for a sin offering, with a ram for a burnt offering, which were paid for out of the public treasury on behalf of the people. The High Priest entered the Holy of Holies and burned incense and then placed the blood of the sacrificed bull on the Mercy Seat. Next, the High Priest presented the two goats before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle and cast lots upon them. One goat was offered on the altar as a sin offering and burned outside the camp. The other goat was allowed to live and became known as the scapegoat. The high priest confessed all of the people’s sins over the head of the live goat which was led away and then released in the wilderness.

The writer of Hebrews took pictures from the Day of Atonement to stress the superiority of Christ’s priesthood and His perfect sacrifice.

**Read Hebrews 13:11-12 (ESV)** <sup>11</sup> *For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp.* <sup>12</sup> *So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.*

The bull and goat burned outside the camp pictures Christ’s suffering outside Jerusalem’s city walls. Jesus was not only our sacrifice but also our High Priest who made the sin offering of His body – not for any sin He had done but for the sins of the world! **2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)** <sup>21</sup> *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Offering 5 – The Trespass Offering – We need atonement to cleanse our conscience.

**Read Leviticus 5:14-16 (ESV)** <sup>14</sup> *The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>15</sup> “If anyone commits a breach of faith and sins unintentionally in any of the holy things of the LORD, he shall bring to the LORD as his compensation, a ram without blemish out of the flock, valued in silver shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, for a guilt offering. <sup>16</sup> He shall also make restitution for what he has done amiss in the holy thing and shall add a fifth to it and give it to the priest. And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering, and he shall be forgiven.*

The trespass offering is also called the guilt or restitution offering. The sin offering and the trespass offering were very much alike. In fact, I became confused as I looked at several passages in Leviticus on these offerings. Generally speaking, the sin offering focused on unintentional law violations. The trespass offering covered individual sins for which restitution needed to be made. The trespass offering emphasized the *damage* done to others by the offender, while the sin offering emphasized the offender's *guilt* before God. The priest would examine the offender and determine which sacrifice was needed.

The trespass offering covers two types of sins: sins against the holy things of the LORD and sins against one's neighbor. Sins against the holy things included offenses such as neglecting to pay a tithe, eating part of the sacrifice belonging to the priests, failing to redeem the firstborn. Although not included in today's focal passage, there is a "sin list" in the beginning of **Leviticus 6** regarding sins against neighbors which included robbery, extortion, finding something and not returning it or failing to return something borrowed.

The big difference between the sin and trespass offerings is the trespass offering requires compensation. Besides the offering of the animal itself, what was owed was paid plus a fifth part or 20% of its value was added to the payment. The concept of restitution within the trespass offering is a vivid reminder of the costliness of sin. **Romans 6:23 (ESV)** <sup>23</sup> *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Read Hebrews 9:13-14 (ESV)** <sup>13</sup> *For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, <sup>14</sup> how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.*

The writer of Hebrews not only references the Day of Atonement sin offering but also the ashes of a heifer ceremony in **Numbers 19**. The sacrifice of a heifer provided ash for the water used to bring purification from uncleanness. A **red** heifer was used. The red of the heifer pictures how Christ became sin for us. **Isaiah 1:18 (ESV)** <sup>18</sup> *“Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.* The longer I've studied these lessons the more I realize how little I really know - but I know this for certain – the blood of Jesus covers all our sins! To God be the glory!