

18-19 Bible Study #23

3/5/19

Leviticus

Five Types of Offerings

- **Burnt Offering**
- **Grain Offering** (Meal or Tribute)
- **Peace Offering** (Fellowship)
 - Thanksgiving Offering
 - Votive Offering
 - Freewill sacrifice
- **Sin Offering**
 - Purification
- **Guilt Offering**

Burnt Offering

- **Purpose:** A general expression of devotion to God
- The offering was to be a bull, sheep, goat, dove, or pigeon
- The animal was to be burnt whole overnight
- The skin was given to the priest
- Most likely, it was the earliest type of atonement in the Old Testament
- Differed from Canaanite burnt offering as they offered children

Grain Offering

- **Purpose:** A voluntary expression of devotion to God, recognizing His goodness and providence
- Generally, the offering was cooked bread – baked, grilled, fried, roasted, or made into cereal – always seasoned with salt and was unsweetened and unleavened
- Only a portion was to be burnt and the remainder went to the priests for their meal

Peace Offering

- **Purpose:** To consecrate a meal between two or more parties before God and share that meal together in fellowship of peace and commitment to others' future prosperity (also known as a Thanksgiving offering or a Freewill offering)
- The offering could be cattle, sheep, or a goat (male or female without defect)
- It could include a variety of breads
- The portions unsuitable for eating were given to God

Peace Offering (Cont)

- Depending on the type, the breast may have been given to the High Priest; the right thigh to the priest officiating at the meal
- The rest of the meal was to be eaten within one day by the fellowship of parties and the leftovers were to be burned after two days

Sin Offering

- **Purpose:** To offer of atonement for unintentional sin and to purify oneself for re-entering the presence of God
- Sometimes seen as a guilt offering to remove the consequences for lack of perfection
- The offering contained elements of a burnt offering yet at the same time had elements of a peace offering
- Some of the sin for which one needed atonement were not moral sins, but matters of ritual impurity
- It contained many elements of a Purification Offering, but the meal was not shared by the one offering the sacrifice

Guilt Offering

- **Purpose:** To make reparations for one's sins
- It did not refer to a matter of one's conscience, but rather to something one owes on account of a sin
- It had a specific monetary value, and one who owed another on account of a debt due to a sin could repay it in silver rather than by sacrificing a ram
- An additional 20% fee was assessed and given to the priest who mitigated the debt

Leviticus (Cont)

- **Leviticus 5** discusses God's mercy and how the people were to confess their sins and bring their offerings to the priests
- Father provided an explanation of how the people understood the need for sacrifices in response to sin
 - It should **not be seen** as some sort of “**mechanical thing**”
 - It was not a simple response to one having offended God could use the sacramental system to balance out or counteract the offense against Him

Leviticus (Cont)

- That was the way the pagans understood how one paid for sins
- We must remember that God is “immutable” and does not change His mind
- Therefore, the purpose for offering a sacrifice was to change the sinner’s heart
- If they were required to give God a costly sacrifice, hopefully the cost would cause them to not commit that act again
- Father pointed out that this was similar to the way a parent punishes a child in hope of changing his behavior

Leviticus (Cont)

- The same principle goes for why we are called to go to the Sacrament of Penance
- This means that all these Levitical requirements were given by a loving father hoping to improve the lives of His children
- When an Israelite committed some sort of sin, he was repentant, confessed the sin to a priest, and then brought an offering
- The priest took the sacrifice and offered it to God usually as a burnt offering

Leviticus (Cont)

- This act caused the sinner to let go of something that was usually very costly
- Also, of interest, is that even though a specific sacrifice was to be offered for a specific offense against God, the required sacrifice was based on the ability of the sinner to pay (ox, cow, lamb for the wealthy, and turtle doves or pigeons for the poor)
- The same concept applies for us via “tithing” (10%)

Leviticus (Cont)

- **Leviticus 6**

- Discussed deceiving a neighbor, robbery, or oppression (which required a guilt offering)
- Next, it discussed the requirements for a **burnt offering** (which was left on the altar all night)
- The offering offered when Aaron and his sons were anointed to the priesthood
- Then, the requirements for a **cereal offering**
- Finally, the requirements for a **sin offering**

Leviticus (Cont)

- **Leviticus 7** begins with more information about the guilt offering
- Then provides for the **peace offering**
- One form of this was the **thanksgiving** or *Todah* offering
 - Several scholars, including Cardinal Ratzinger and Tim Gray,*₁ have written on the connection between the *Todah* sacrifice and the *Eucharist*
 - *From Jewish Passover to Christian Eucharist the Story of the Todah* by Tim Gray
 - The Greek word *Eucharist* means “Thanksgiving”
 - The Mass is seen as the *Eucharistic* (Thanksgiving) liturgy and is the greatest Christian sacrament

Leviticus (Cont)

- The *todah* was offered by the early Israelites in thanksgiving for a great harvest, victory in battle, or a family member who recovered from an illness
- The thankful Israelite would bring a sacrifice to the priest who would offer some of it on the “altar of burnt offering”, consume some of it, and return the rest to the offeror to take home and consume
- We can see this in **1st Samuel 1:4-8**
- This was Hebrew for “Thanksgiving”

Leviticus (Cont)

- **Leviticus 8** presents the ordination of *Aaron* and his four sons (*Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar*)
 - We were introduced to the description of this event in **Exodus 27 and 28**
 - Here, *Aaron* and his sons were led to the Tent of Meeting where Moses anointed them priests and then required them to remain in the Tabernacle for 7 days and nights to make atonement for their sins