

LESSON 5: THE DAILY SACRIFICE

Review:

Lesson One - The purpose of the sanctuary is to remove the barriers of sin and guilt that keep us from face-to-face communion with God.

Lesson Two - The details of the sacrificial system and of the sanctuary services were developed over time as God saw fit. We refer to this as “progressive revelation.”

Lesson Three - The sanctuary's court, with its enclosing curtain, altar of burnt offering, and brass laver, encourage and invite the believer to accept the means of forgiveness the Lord offers those willing to trust Him.

Lesson Four - The holy place, the first apartment of the tabernacle, illustrates God's provision of the Holy Spirit, the scriptures, and the privilege of prayer.

NOW that we have gone over the various elements of the courtyard and the holy place, we can look more carefully at how these things fit into the symbolic program for dealing with sin.

Please note the word “symbolic.” Nothing that happened in the earthly sanctuary was sufficient by itself to actually atone for sin. No sacrifice of lamb or goat or ox was sufficient to solve the problem. It required the life and death of the Son of God, so these ceremonies and sacrifices—even though they were God's specified means for His people to demonstrate faith in Old Testament times—were never His actual means of forgiveness. They were symbols.

Does that mean, then, that sinners in Old Testament times were not forgiven? No, it means that the basis of forgiveness and atonement was not in those sacrifices—but that true-hearted believers could still access the “real thing” through faith.

We'll see more of how faith worked (and still works) as we go along. But for now, let's look at the services that God set up in the courtyard and the holy place. There were quite a number of special circumstances that made for slight variations in what was done, but the general features remain throughout. Collectively, all these services are referred to as the “daily” services

1. What was the overall point of the “daily” services?

Leviticus 4:20 - So the priest shall make atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.

Leviticus 4:26 - So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.

Leviticus 4:31 - So the priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.

No surprises here. God's goal in the sanctuary is always at-one-ment with His people. That meant meeting their need for forgiveness.

2. What was the main point of this daily service?

Exodus 29:38–39, 42 - Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight.... This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet you to speak with you.

This “continual burnt offering” was the first ceremony in the sanctuary each morning and the last each evening. Because of this, it was often called the “morning and evening sacrifice.” On behalf of the nation as a whole, it

indicated that Israel had chosen God, and that they recognized their need of forgiveness and their dependence on Him. The offering of these sacrifices were times of prayer, heart searching, and confession of sin for the people.

This daily sacrifice is the picture brought to mind by John the Baptist's declaration that Jesus was the "Lamb of God." (John 1:29, 36) But there is more involved here than we usually think of. Whenever an animal was sacrificed as a burnt offering, there were to be accompanying offerings of grain, salt, oil, and grape juice. These enhance the mental image with reminders of God's sustaining and preserving, the power of the Holy Spirit, and yet another depiction of the constantly repeated thought that sin is costly to the point of blood.

3. But weren't there other sacrifices besides this "continual burnt offering"?

Leviticus 7:37 - This is the law of the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin offering, the trespass offering, the consecrations, and the sacrifice of the peace offering.

There were quite a few different offerings, even a few special ones not mentioned in this verse. Some were for special occasions, some were to express thankfulness to God, and some were used when asking for special counsel from the Lord. One thing they all had in common was the requirement that the animals offered as sacrifices must be "without blemish," a clear portrayal of Jesus' sinlessness. (Numbers 28:3)

For the sake of time and space, we won't study all these different sacrifices in detail. First we'll focus on the sin offering and then take a look at a few special cases of interest.

4. If sins could be forgiven through the morning and evening sacrifice, what was the point of the sin offering?

Leviticus 5:1 - If a person... is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter—if he does not tell it, he bears guilt.

Leviticus 5:2 - If a person touches any unclean thing... and he is unaware of it, he also shall be unclean and guilty.

Leviticus 5:4 - If a person swears, speaking thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, whatever it is that a man may pronounce by an oath, and he is unaware of it—when he realizes it, then he shall be guilty.

Leviticus 5:15–16 - If a person commits a trespass, and sins unintentionally in regard to the holy things of the LORD, then he shall bring to the LORD as his trespass offering a ram without blemish from the flocks.... He shall make restitution for the harm that he has done in regard to the holy thing, and shall add one-fifth to it.

Leviticus 6:2–5 - If a person sins and commits a trespass against the LORD by lying to his neighbor about what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or about a pledge, or about a robbery, or if he has extorted from his neighbor, or if he has found what was lost and lies concerning it, and swears falsely—in any one of these things that a man may do in which he sins.... He shall restore its full value, add one-fifth more to it, and give it to whomever it belongs, on the day of his trespass offering.

The sin offering (sometimes called the trespass offering) was especially designed to guard certain problem areas. Each of the special cases given for the sin offering is one that we find easy to rationalize or overlook. God is saying, "Yes, you have to tell the whole truth." "No, carelessness is not an excuse." "You need to understand that spiritual things are especially important." "No, you can't cheat people and get away with it."

What's more, since these sins fell into the sin offering category instead of the "continual burnt offering" category, they cost a bit more. God understands human psychology and the concept of what we call "punitive damages."

5. What was the procedure for sin offerings?

Leviticus 4:27–31 - If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally by doing something against any of the commandments of the LORD... or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, then he shall... lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering. Then the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour all the remaining blood at the base of the altar.... The priest shall burn it on the altar for a sweet aroma to the LORD. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.

Leviticus 4:5–7 - The anointed priest shall take some of the... blood and bring it to the tabernacle of meeting. 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. 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.

Leviticus 6:25–26, 30 - *This is the law of the sin offering.... The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. In a holy place it shall be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of meeting.... But no sin offering from which any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of meeting, to make atonement in the holy place, shall be eaten.*

Though not explicitly mentioned in this passage, the act of laying one's hand on the head of the sacrificial animal indicates a confession of sin, and the transferring of that sin to the animal. Then, in perhaps the most powerful symbol in the Bible, the sinner must kill the lamb himself.

Depending upon who offered the sacrifice, the priest either sprinkled the blood before the veil and smeared it on the horns of the altar of incense, or on the horns of the altar of burnt offering. In either case, the remaining blood was poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering.

Any time the blood was not carried into the tabernacle, however, the priest was required to eat at least some of the sacrifice. But if the blood had been taken into the tabernacle, he was forbidden to eat it.

6. What is the importance of the blood going into the tabernacle, and the priest eating the sacrifice?

The sinner's guilt, confessed over the head of the animal, was now further transferred into the sanctuary, either through the blood, or in the person of the priest. We will see the importance of this more fully when we study the yearly service.

7. So, is that all there was to the daily service?

No, there were other services that were appointed for special circumstances, but the offerings for sin were the heart of the whole system. That's appropriate, really, since sin is the biggest problem we all face.

Lesson Summary:

- The main purpose of the daily service was to provide ongoing forgiveness for the people.
- The sin offering involved bringing a lamb to the sanctuary. The sinner confessed his sins on the head of the lamb and then personally killed the lamb.
- The blood of the sacrifice was either placed on the horns of the altar of sacrifice or sprinkled before the veil in the tabernacle. The sacrifice was then burnt.
- The record of the sins were symbolically transferred into the tabernacle to be dealt with later.

My Response:

I appreciate and accept Christ's sacrifice as my substitute.

Next Lesson: The Most Holy Place