

MESSIAH IN THE OT

Week 7 – Made According to Pattern/The Tabernacle: What Did the Sacrifices in the OT Accomplish?

March 5, 2019

Why was a blood sacrifice required in the Old Testament sacrificial system?

In Leviticus 17, the LORD commands against consuming blood. Lev. 17:10-11 - *And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. ¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.* Blood represented life. Without blood, a creature or person could not live. Since blood contains life, blood is sacred to God. God chose to use a blood sacrifice as part of the sacrificial system of the Jewish people. Each time blood was shed, it reminded the people of life and death. AND, the blood sacrifice of the Jewish people was directly related to the freedom of the Israelites from Egypt at the first Passover.

All of the many, many blood sacrifices seen throughout the Old Testament foreshadowed the once-for-all-time, ultimate sacrifice to come so that the Israelites would never forget that, without the blood, there is no remission (pardon).

The sacrificial system was designed to cover sin until it was finally PAID FOR...taken away through the death of Jesus. Jesus' one-time sacrifice became the fulfillment of the law and His death marked a new covenant (Heb. 9:16-17) for those who would believe in His name AND paid the price for the sin of the OT worshippers who came to God in faith. "It is finished"! AND "new covenant" is in the OT – Jer. 31:31 – God promised to make the "new covenant" with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

Heb. 9:15 (NASB) - *For this reason He (Jesus) is the mediator* (Jesus is the One who intervenes between God and man to resolve conflict, to ratify a covenant. Jesus restores peace between God and man) *of a new covenant*, (the new testament) *so that, since a death has taken place* (Jesus' death) *for the redemption* (**price paid; ransom – price paid for the release of someone in captivity**) *of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called* (those coming under God's promises re: redemption) *may receive the promise of the eternal* (as opposed to temporary) *inheritance*. Jesus' death retroactively redeemed (purchased out of bondage/captivity) all those who had believed (BY FAITH) in God and who believed His promises in the Old Covenant because Jesus' sacrifice is our propitiation – our satisfaction – satisfying God's righteous demands!

What do we see in the Day of Atonement? The High Priest sacrificed a bull and the Lord's goat – killing both and sprinkling their blood on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies – to cover their transgressions (rebellion) and all their sins (sinful condition) that the people had committed in the preceding year! (Lev. 16:16, 21, 30) And, it appears that on the Day of Atonement sacrifice was made to cover the unintentional and intentional/defiant sins.

2

WHY the Day of Atonement? Sin is in the “camp,” the camp of the children of Israel where God dwelled over the mercy seat between the cherubim in the Holy of Holies. Biblically, the Day of Atonement was to provide an atonement (lit., a covering) for sin, for the Holy of Holies for the tabernacle itself, for the altar of incense in the Holy Place, for the priests (including the high priest), and for the sins committed in by the people of Israel. Yom Kippur was divinely ordained “because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins” (Lev. 16:16). God chose to dwell amidst the children of Israel and the nation was required to stand clean before its holy God.

Each year, the issue at stake is whether or not God would continue to abide within the camp, in the midst of His people. The uncleanness of the people contaminated the dwelling place of God, and the Day of Atonement was provided to atone for these sins.

Once a year, at the Day of Atonement, the High Priest, ONLY the High Priest was instructed to go into the Holy of Holies. The solemnity of the day was underscored by God telling Moses to warn Aaron not to come into the Holy of Holies whenever he felt like it. Aaron could only come into the Holy of Holies on this special day once a year, lest he die (v. 2). This was not a ceremony to be taken lightly, and the people were to understand that atonement for sin was to be done God's way.

Since the High Priest was not sinless, he had to sacrifice a sin offering - a bull for his sins and for sins of his house and sprinkle the bull's blood on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies. The High Priest sacrificed for his own sins, his family's sins, all the people of Israel, and for the Holy Place.

The High Priest then cast lots for two goats. The lots determined which goat would serve as the Lord's goat - the Lord's goat which would be killed, its blood being sprinkled on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies where God dwelled...and the lots determined which goat would serve as the scapegoat on which all the sins of the people would be placed (Lev. 16:21-22). The Hebrew word for scapegoat is thought to be *azazel* which some interpret *azazel* as scapegoat/entire removal. With the scapegoat escorted into the

wilderness...and perhaps brought to a precipice where the scapegoat falls to its death... with the scapegoat NOT RETURNING TO THE CAMP, it was believed by the Israelites that God had removed their sin and could dwell in the camp another year...until the next Day of Atonement. And, God's dwelling was evidenced by the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire.

The Lord's goat and the scapegoat foreshadow Jesus Who became the Lord's goat and the scapegoat. The Lord's goat was slaughtered for the sins of the people and the scapegoat took on the sins of the Israelites and removed them. The Day of Atonement foreshadowed the ultimate redemption that Jesus provides.

Five sacrifices are outlined in Leviticus. The first three were voluntary: the burnt offering (complete dedication/consecration to God); the grain offering (fine grain likened to unblemished animal) spoke to thanksgiving and service to God; the peace offering (peace and fellowship between the true worshipper – heart attitude – and God).

3

Two sacrifices were compulsory: the sin offering spoke to covering iniquity where restitution was not possible; the trespass offering spoke to covering iniquity where restitution was possible

All these sacrifices/offerings were forms of worship to God – speaking to obedience, a repentant heart, and to thankfulness.

Hebrews 10:11-12 shares that the need for regular blood sacrifices changed with the shed blood of Christ: *And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.*

Because God is holy, He must attack sin. Sin is like an aggressive cancer eating away at people – at God's creation. God's righteousness – His holiness is coupled with His love and mercy. The harmony established within God's attributes is what we see played out in the sacrifices.

What did the OT sacrifices accomplish?

- It appears from the various Scripture passages that the Levitical sacrifices were accepted by God when offered by faith in the promises that God had made, on the basis of the anticipated death of Jesus.

- The faithful worshipper was putting his trust in God's promise, that the "Seed of the woman," the One from the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the One Who would be God the Lamb, the One from the tribe of Judah, the One called "Shiloh," the One Who would be the Star and Scepter, the One Who would be a Prophet like Moses would come and present Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for all sin for all time.

- OT sacrifices were an atonement, or covering for sin, affirming in the mind of God that the offerer was trusting in the coming sacrifice of the Messiah. At the same time, for the offerer the sacrifice was a foreshadowing of the Messiah.

- These sacrifices were focused on reconciliation with God. Regarding God and man, reconciliation involves a change in the relationship. It assumes there has been a breakdown in the relationship, but now there has been a change from a state of enmity and fragmentation to one of harmony and fellowship. And so we see...

- Concerning the daily sacrifices God said, *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.* ⁴³ *And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory* (Ex. 29:42-43).

- While it might be difficult for us to comprehend, the Israelite approaching the tabernacle with his substitutionary sacrifice viewed this as an act of worship. When the sacrifice was offered humbly, reverently, and with faith in God, it was received by Him as an act of worship. In bringing the spotless animal to the tabernacle and killing it, the offerer realized that they had offended a holy God!

- The offerer learned the holiness of God (Lev. 11:44-45)
 - The offerer learned more so his sinfulness.

- When the sacrifices were offered in conformity with God's standards, obeying God's commands (Lev. 17:11) and offered in faith, it brought pardoning but could not

4

make the one who offered the sacrifice perfect as there was a reminder of sins every year. The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin (Heb. 10:1-4; Heb. 9:11-15).

- Pardon – mercy imparted; judgment postponed (Rom. 3:25)

Passages in Scripture that might cause you confusion:

- Psa. 40:6-8 - *Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.* ⁷ *Then I said, "Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me.* ⁸ *I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart.* Psa. 40 is written by King David

who defiantly committed sin/intentional sin. Sacrifice was NOT required for intentional sin. The defiant sinner was called on to REPENT.

- I Sam. 15:22-23 – Samuel speaking to King Saul defiantly disobeyed God. No sacrifice would cover the sin of the defiant. Repentance was the answer.

- Hosea 6:6 – Context: God’s call to Israel to repent.

- Isa. 1:11-17 – Context: God called out Israel’s sinfulness in veering from Him. God then asked, what good are your sacrifices?

OT Sacrificial System

JESUS

Temporary (duration)

Eternal

Heb. 7:22; Heb. 8:6, 13; Heb. 10:20

Shadow

Substance

Heb. 8:5; Heb. 9:23-24; Heb. 10:1

Aaronic/Levitical priesthood

Melchizedekian

Psa. 110:4; Heb. 6:19-7:25

Human priesthood/sinful

Sinless Priest

Heb. 7:26-27; Heb. 9:7

Priest limited by death

Eternal Priest

Heb. 7:16-17, 23-24

Daily sacrifices

Once-for-all sacrifice

Heb. 7:27; Heb. 9:12, 25, 26; Heb. 10:9, 10, 12

Animal sacrifices

Sacrifice of God’s Son

Heb. 9:11-15, 26; Heb. 10:4-10, 19

Ongoing sacrifices – reminder of sins

Sacrifices no longer
necessary

Heb. 10:11-14, 18

Atonement (covering)

Redemption - eternal
propitiation (appeasement)

Heb. 7:25; Heb. 9:12, 15; Heb. 10:1-4, 12

No direct access into God’s presence

The veil was torn; direct
access to God

Heb. 9:8

Could not make offerer perfect

Offerer made complete in
Jesus' finished work

What do you think of God's gift of the sacrificial system to the children of Israel?

5

Some believers have said, "ALL in the OT is for us – the Church."

What do you think about such a statement?

Did God not have intent when He communicated with Adam and Eve, with Noah, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with King David....?

Heb. 11:8-10, 13-16 - By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴ For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. ¹⁵ And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

The Old Testament sacrifices accomplished a pardon when God saw the faith of the offerer as they looked forward to the promise of God's redemption through the coming Messiah. When the Messiah came, He accomplished fully and finally through the sacrifice of Himself what the OT sacrifices accomplished temporarily while not making the offerer perfect (complete).

And, the OT sacrifices provided a postponement of judgment. Rom. 3:25 - ...*whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness,*

because in His forbearance [tolerance] God had passed over the sins that were previously committed. The OT sacrifices and the sacrifice of JESUS the Messiah work together perfectly because God's plan of redemption is perfect. (Psa. 18:30) God's plan of redemption is an eternal certainty. All the historical aspects of true worship (by faith) of God fit together in a way that points us to the glory of the sufficiency of Jesus the Messiah, the Savior, God the Son!

Regarding God's MERCY (not getting what we deserve) in postponement of judgment during the temporary OT sacrifices, let's look again at where the OT saint went at death... **For the OT saints** who were declared righteous, who were looking forward to the fulfillment of God's promise of the coming Messiah, upon death **PRIOR TO JESUS' ULTIMATE SACRIFICE ON THE CROSS**, OT saints who were declared righteous by God through the Holy Spirit, even though the Holy Spirit did not indwell OT saints, those OT saints when they died, went to the grave, to Sheol. Their bodies

6

underwent corruption in the grave; their souls were in "Abraham's bosom" (a compartment in the grave for the righteous) where there was no torment. In Luke 16:19-31, Jesus speaks of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man died and went to Hades (Gk)/Sheol (Heb.) - the grave. Because the rich man was not a believer, he suffered torment in flames! Lazarus, a believer, went to the grave. But, because Lazarus was saved, he was in another "compartment," so to speak, in the grave. Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom where there was no torment. A great gulf was fixed between the place of torment for the unrighteous and Abraham's bosom for the righteous. This was what seems to have occurred prior to Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. In the OT, the sacrificial system provided atonement – a covering for sin.

What happened to the OT saints in the grave AFTER the cross? There are those who teach that Jesus took the souls of the righteous into the presence of the Lord at His ascension. Ephesians 4:8-10 - Jesus led captivity captive (quoted from Psalm 68:18).

Through the OT sacrificial system, the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin (Heb. 10:4). Israel looked forward to the Redeemer Who would take away sin. The blood of animals covered sin. Atonement comes from the Hebrew word kippur which means *to cover*. Jesus redeemed us. The concept of redemption includes the purchase, removal from sale, and the complete freedom of the ransomed (released) individual through the death of Jesus. The righteous who were being held in Abraham's bosom until His death on the cross were brought into the presence of God by Jesus at His ascension. Since Jesus' redemption at His crucifixion, the soul of the believer who dies goes immediately to be with the Lord.

Paul writes in Eph. 4:8-10 that when Jesus ascended on high – between Jesus’ death and resurrection...*Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.”*⁹ *(Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?*¹⁰ *He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)*

The reference seems to tell us that Jesus, at His ascension, led the souls of those who were saved in OT times - prior to His crucifixion – into the presence of God in heaven.

“Captives,” for those of us who hold this view, in this context were those saved individuals, who were held captive by the forces opposed to God, until Jesus’ finished work on the cross (Jn. 19:30), having previously died, who were in Abraham’s bosom until Jesus’ death on the cross made the way for them to enter heaven.

Isa. 61:1 - *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;* (Heb. 2:14 - *that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,*)

QUESTIONS

What did you learn through this lesson?

7

How does the tabernacle and sacrificial system impact your view of the Bible and the big picture of the Bible?

How does the sacrificial system reflect God’s character?

How does the sacrificial system speak to God’s plan of salvation?

How is your life impacted?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread the Week 7 handout with the Bible references.

Jot down observations and questions.

Seek to find answers.

Share what you've learned with at least one person.

Read Week 8 when you receive it.