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## The Sin Offering

### Introduction

The “sin offering”, as with every offering, is too big for a paper such as this. Consequently, only a few of its points will be considered.

### The Background To The Sin Offering

Had we been among those who stood at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:9-19; Psa. 77:18; Heb. 12:19-20) and witnessed the frightening manifestations of divine glory, it would have been a never to be forgotten and terrifying experience, for even Moses said: “I exceedingly fear and quake” (Heb. 12:21). With that experience there would have been very quickly a realization that God is unequalled in solitary glory (Isa. 46:5), unchanging (Mal. 3:6), and holy (Josh. 24:19). There would have been the understanding that He is the consummate personification of power (Gen. 17:1) having infinite resources (Gen. 14:19). God is an exceptionally intimidating and fearful person. This was a truth Moses learnt (Ex. 3:5), as did Job (Job 40:4), and Peter (Lk. 5:8). As with anyone who is given a glimpse of God, there is an acute awareness of their own sinfulness. It is against the background of the holiness of God that sin is fully manifested and its consequences realized. With such a view and appreciation man realizes his need for a sin offering.

### Being Redeemed and Delivered Did Not and Does Not Mean Sinless Perfection

The children of Israel were redeemed by blood (Ex. 12:7, 13) and delivered by power (Ex. 14:19-31), but that did not mean they were suddenly made holy and incapable of sin. The same truth applies to the believer today. Our redemption and deliverance does not result in sinless perfection. They were to quickly learn only two things:

- a) Sin is a serious matter. Because of one sin:
  - i) Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden (Gen. 3:22-24)
  - ii) David had four deaths in his family (2 Sam. 12:18; 13:28; 18:33, 1 Kgs. 2:25)
  - iii) Nebuchadnezzar became like an animal for seven years (Dan. 4:27-32)
  - iv) Ananias and Sapphira lost their lives (Acts 5:5, 10)

This does not mean they only committed one sin in their lifetime, but rather for that one particular sin the judgment came. This was a “sin unto death” (1 Jn. 5:16).

- b) The enormity of the cost of having sin atoned for. This was no light matter. The shed blood was not a spiritual detergent or like a delete button on a computer. A championship animal had to die for sin to be atoned and forgiven (Lev. 4:20, 26, 35).

### Some Intriguing Features of The Sin Offering

- 1) The expression, “before the LORD”. There are two offerings where this expression is not found, the meal and trespass offering. However, it is used twice regarding the burnt offering (Lev. 1:5, 11); three times regarding the peace offering (Lev. 3:1, 7, 12); and nine times concerning the sin offering (Lev. 4:4 (twice), 6, 7, 15 (twice), 17, 18, 24). Why is this so emphasized? I suggest to indicate the intense solemnity involved. The word “before” (Lev. 4:4, 6) indicates “face, presence”, and the thought then is the priest “shall bring the bullock . . . before the face of God”. How unsettling this would be for God is a perfectionist and expects perfection, therefore, He will scrutinize the bullock and if it is not perfect, without blemish in His evaluation, it would not be accepted. It would have been totally irrelevant had it been without blemish in man eyes, it had to be so in the evaluation of God. The individual then had to “kill” the bullock before the Lord, and the priest had to physically handle the blood before the Lord (Lev. 4:6, 17, 25, 30). There was nothing casual about this activity. Applying it to ourselves, it can be very easy to confess our sins and generalize them, but God is the God of specifics. The problem is that I, like the children of Israel, do not know all the sins I commit. Then I thank God that even if my heart does not condemn me, God is greater than my heart and knows all things (1 Jn. 3:20) and He is the propitiation, not only for my sins, but the sins of the whole world (1 Jn. 2:2).

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- 2) The fat. There are several Hebrew words translated “fat”:
- a) “Peder” is only used three times and means suet (Lev. 1:8, 12; 8:20). Suet indicates the health of the animal, foreshadowing the Lord and thus the spiritual health of Christ, the inward cumulative perfections of the Lord.
  - b) “Cheleb” is the best fat and is translated “best” in (Num. 18:12, 29, 30, 32), and “fat” in (Lev. 3:3, 4, 9, 10, 14-17). It is used in sixty-nine verses, and when connected with the offerings, it carries the thought of the attitude of the offerer in being a spiritually minded individual having a high evaluation of God. This prefigures the perfections of the Lord personally, which gave weight to His offering’s acceptability as with Abel. Secondly, it prefigures the perfections of that which He gave to God, how and why He gave.
  - c) The children of Israel could see the “fat” but not partake, so we must stand on holy ground and realize that whatever aspect of the Lord we look at, there are depths too sacred for us to contemplate. God is exceedingly jealous of the Lord, and graciously permits us to know a little, but inevitably there are glories that are too sacred for us to peer into or handle. There have been many great intellectuals who are godly men, but no man has the ability to grasp the perfections of His character, nor can tongue fully declare His excellencies. The words of J N Darby are gloriously true: “The Father only, (glorious claim) the son can comprehend”. Only the perfect God could truly appreciate and delight in the man Jesus. He was:
    - i) Unequaled in the pleasure He gave to God. (Isa. 42:1; Matt. 3:17)
    - ii) Unswayed in His devotion to God. (Heb. 10:9)
    - iii) Uncompromising in His stand for the truth. (Jn. 8:40; 1 Tim. 6:13)
    - iv) Unequaled in His sacrifice. (Heb. 10:12)
    - v) Unimpeachable in His life. (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 Jn. 3:5)

#### [The Distinction Between The Statements Concerning The Priest And The Other Persons](#)

With the sins of ignorance there are two statements made concerning the whole congregation, the ruler, and the common people which are never made concerning the priest.

- a) Concerning the whole congregation, ruler, and common people it is if they: “sin through ignorance” (Lev. 4:13, 22, 27).
- b) Concerning the whole congregation, ruler and common people it is recorded: and “it shall be forgiven him/them” (Lev. 4:20, 26, 35).

This poses the question, “Why does it not say these things concerning the priest?” I suggest it was not expected that the priest would sin by ignorance for: “The priest’s lips should keep knowledge” (Mal. 2:7) and he also ought to know he had been forgiven.

#### [The Individual’s Contrast With Christ](#)

- 1) We all sin because of ignorance. Even Peter and Paul, the apostles, sinned through ignorance. At one point he called the High Priest a “whited wall”, and then when rebuked replied: “I wist not, brethren, that he was the High priest (Acts 23:4-5); to his audience Peter said: “I wot that through ignorance ye did it” (Acts 3:17).
- 2) Christ was never guilty of acting through ignorance for when men tried to correct his apparent lack of knowledge, they were the ones corrected. Some of the illustrations of such are:
  - a) When the Lord said: “Let us go into Judaea again,” and the disciples questioned His wisdom in such a move (Jn. 11:7-10).
  - b) Later the Lord told the disciples how “He must go up to Jerusalem and . . . suffer . . . and be killed” (Matt. 16:21). Peter quickly sought to correct the Lord. As far as Peter was concerned the Lord was being foolish and not really thinking things through (Matt. 16:22).
  - c) When the disciples were in the boat and the storm arose while He slept, they accused Him of lack of care

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and complacency about their situation. He stilled the storm and waves and gently rebuked them. He was not ignorant of that which would happen or the situation. How well He knew that when He would appear to back out of a situation Satan would take advantage of that and would cause fear to the disciples in questioning His care. Interestingly, they did recognize that He was the only One who could help (Matt. 8:25).

- d) There was the day when He was preaching and they, thinking He did not know His mother and brethren were outside, was instructed concerning this. He then used the situation not to rebuke to show His awareness, but to clarify that those who were His real mother and brethren had a spiritual relationship with him (Matt. 12:47).
  - e) The disciples came to Him “instructing” Him to send the multitudes away. His response was a lesson teaching the all sufficiency of Him for their every situation. Whither they were in the boat in a storm or five thousand needing fed, He alone was sufficient. He was not unaware of the situation but let it develop until they were at their teaching moment (Matt. 14:15).
  - f) Again, the disciples thought He was unaware of having offended the Pharisees and say to Him: “Knowest Thou not?” Again, He teaches them a fundamental truth, not all who are religious are plants the Father had planted (Matt. 15:12-13).
- 3) The priest brought the bullock unto the Lord, and before the Lord (Lev. 4:3, 4).
- a) The animal was brought there unwittingly having no idea of what was about to happen or the spiritual significance it was foreshadowing. Who was it brought the Lord to the place of sacrifice? Was it the Roman Soldiers? The Jewish leaders? God? Himself? Me? There is a level in which it was each of these.
    - i) The Roman soldiers led Him out (Matt. 27:31)
    - ii) The Jews, by crying “crucify Him”, caused Him to be led to the place of sacrifice (Mk. 15:13, 14)
    - iii) It was in the purpose of God for Him to be led outside the camp and the gate (Heb. 13:11, 12).
    - iv) It was His own purpose and dedication which caused Him to go to the place of sacrifice (Jn. 12:27; 14:31)
    - v) It was me who joined with the Jews in not wanting Him to reign over me that caused Him to go to the place of sacrifice.
  - b) Unlike the animal, the Lord knew why He was going to the place of sacrifice and its significance.
    - i) He knew why He came into the world.
      1. “And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth” (Mk. 1:38)
      2. “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour” (Jn. 12:27)
      3. “Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice” (Jn. 18:37)
- 4) In the Old Testament a son, who was disobedient, was to be hung on a tree. "Cursed is everyone that hanging on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). Christ, the son, was never disobedient. He always did the will of God, He always showed the attitude of God, always delighted in the ways of God, yet for Him to be the sacrifice for sin required him hanging on the tree. There is to be made in the Scriptures the distinction between Christ on the cross and Christ on the tree, for whenever the tree is mentioned it is always connected with a curse.

### Questions

As we briefly consider the sin offering there are other truths one can consider.

- 1) In what way was sin dealt with in the Old Testament?
  - a) Under Law sin was atoned, but what does that mean? Very simply, it means “to cover”. The word translated “atonement” was first used when Noah was building the ark and he covered it with “pitch” (Gen. 6:14). Under law sins were not fully covered, but were eradicated “until” the supreme

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sacrifice of the Lord, which cleanseth from all sin, was offered (1 Jn. 1:7-9). Under the law the covering did not remove the guilt. Included in our cleansing is justification (Rom. 3:24); sanctification and redemption (Cor. 1:30); and glorious forgiveness (Col. 1:14).

- 2) Does sin mean a loss of relationship or fellowship?
- a) Thank God the relationship can never be lost. The Lord said: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (Jn. 10:28). However, the fellowship can be broken, and while we are never told to ask for forgiveness for, "your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake" (1 Jn. 2:12), we are told to confess our sins to enjoy the blessedness of forgiveness: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn. 1:9).

#### Application For The Believer

With the knowledge that the Lord is the sacrifice for sins to end all sacrifices, there is given to the child of God the assuring knowledge of two truths:

- a) Christ has been made an offering for sin (Heb. 10:8), and being the final and all sufficient sacrifice for sin was not something He was coerced into, but an act He did of His own volition out of love (Jn. 13:1). God, being righteous, has righteously dealt with the matter of sin (Rom. 3:21). His righteousness has been completely satisfied, and in righteousness He offers salvation to all without distinction (Rom. 2:11).

There are many verses scattered throughout the scriptures which endorse this comforting truth to our hearts and minds, such as:

- a) "When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin" (Isa. 53:10)
- b) "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29)
- c) "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18)
- d) "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26)
- e) "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever" (Heb. 10:12)

While we are in the world the reality is we are very much part of it, and there can stealthily steal over the saint a casualness regarding sin. The personal result is one loses sight or is prevented from having a graphic realization of the price which had to be paid for its removal. Sin becomes an intellectual non-consequential matter. When an Israelite sinned and saw a beautiful animal which would gain top honors at a show being slaughtered, it was real to him. As he watched the blood flow and the animal fall to the ground bleeding to death, he realized, "That was the price that had to be paid for my sin to be atoned". Well may we sing

Oh make me understand it, help me to take it in,  
What it meant to Thee, the Holy One, to bear away my sin.

. . . . Rowan Jennings