



## **Exodus 25; Leviticus 1-16**

# **Sacrifices of the Covenant**

The most fundamental thing we can say about God is His holiness. He is just and He must punish sin. The flip side of that same coin is His love in which He provides atonement for the sinner. How can a holy and righteous God be just and at the same time the justifier of the believing sinner?

The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament. He is a holy and righteous God who loves His people and provides what they cannot possibly provide for themselves.

## **THE LAW REVELED THE HOLINESS OF GOD**

The Law of the Covenant revealed the holiness of Yahweh and therefore exposed the sinfulness of sin. We can conclude with the apostle Paul, "by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). Every individual the world over comes up short of the glory of God. We do not live up to His expectations for humanity (Romans 3:23).

### ***The Law never saved anyone.***

The Law could not save anyone. It was never intended to save anyone. The Law was given to redeemed people. Ever since the Passover night in Egypt Israel was a redeemed people. They belonged to Yahweh. He purchased them. Therefore, the Law revealed how a redeemed people should live. A holy God must have a holy people and this holiness must embrace the whole life of the redemptive nation. Law never was and is still not a means of salvation. It was never meant to be a means of salvation for anyone.

God's purpose in redeeming Israel was for her to be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel" (Exodus 19:5-6). Therefore, in the words of the apostle Paul the Law was a schoolmaster or tutor to lead Israel to Christ (Galatians 3:23-26). First Peter 2:5, 9 tells us now that we have come to Christ all believers share in the priesthood of the believer. The priesthood belongs to all with Christ the High Priest. All believers are priests and all priests need to function in His kingdom.

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The Covenant with Israel and the Law were ratified with a sacrifice (Ex. 24:3, 7-8). Various sacrifices are introduced to the new nation in Exodus and Leviticus. God came and met with His people on the Mercy Seat over the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:17, 21-22; 26:34). Sin was removed by means of the propitiatory sacrifice on the lid or covering of the Ark. The blood of the sin offering was sprinkled and atonement was made on the lid or covering of the Mercy Seat. Justice and mercy met there. It was the Old Testament throne of grace.

### *Prefigurements of Christ*

All of these various sacrifices and blood rituals were prophetic types, antecedent figures, or foreshadows of the great sacrifice Christ would later make when He offered up Himself for the sins of His people. Every sacrifice anticipated the true and perfect sacrifice that Christ would offer (Matt. 26:28; Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; Heb. 13:20; Zech. 9:11). These were shadows of the coming perfect sacrifice for sin in His death (Titus 2:13-14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). Therefore, Christ is the end of the sacrifices in the Old Testament. The Romans in A. D. 70 destroyed the Temple and there were no more sacrifices for sin by the Jewish people.

The Bible is imperatively clear in its message in both the Old and New Testaments that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins" (Hebrews 9:22). "The wages of sin is death . ." (Romans 6:23a). Someone has to pay the debt for the penalty of sin. Who will pay it? This "shedding of blood" is the payment of the prescribed death penalty. Without it, there is no covering for our sins. Therefore, " . . . the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (6:23b).

All of these sacrifices in the Old Testament were signs and a token pointing to the real atonement which was to come later. Every Old Testament saint gained entrance into heaven on credit.

A. H. Strong boldly expressed it when he wrote, "Before Christ's sacrifice, God's administration was a scandal ~~it~~ needed vindication. The Atonement is God's answer to the charge of freeing the guilty." Therefore, God can be "just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus . . . For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law" (Romans 3:26, 28).

Every sacrifice anticipated some aspect of the true and perfect sacrifice, which Christ would offer. These were shadows of the coming perfect sacrifice for sin. The Hebrew sacrifices came to an end when Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead. The sacrifices taught that the people could only be saved by a substitutionary death, offered on their behalf. All of these sacrifices of the Covenant were mere shadows of the perfect vicarious substitutionary sacrifice of Christ and His new covenant (Hebrews 7:22-28; 9:11-15, 22-28; 10:19-20; Matt. 26:28).

### **JESUS FILLED THE LAW WITH A PERFECT SACRIFICE.**

Jesus Christ is the "ransom" for our sins. Jesus said the Son of Man came "to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). This "ransom" is the payment in order to deliver someone from captivity or bondage. Therefore, we are redeemed from the captivity of the bondage of our sin by the ransom payment of Christ. The ransom payment is the blood of Jesus Christ. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us" (Ephesians 1:7). Our redemption depends solely on the price paid in the blood of Jesus. Jesus paid it in full! You can not add one thing to the finished payment.

### *New covenant written on the heart*

The LORD has written a new covenant of forgiveness upon the heart of believers which issues in forgiveness. The prophet Jeremiah in 31:33-34 clearly states, "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." The blood of Jesus is the fulfillment of this new covenant and we celebrate that covenant in His blood every time we come to the table for the Lord's Supper. His body is broken and His blood is poured out for many. In the vicarious shedding of His blood, an offering has been offered up for our benefit (Heb. 8:6; 7:22; 13:20).

The apostle Paul wrote, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4). Therefore, we have a perfect righteous standing before the LORD based on faith in Christ. Now "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" (Romans 10:9-10; cf. 2 Cor. 5:21).

Here are some more Scriptures for you to ponder regarding this grand ransom by Christ. Ephesians 1:7; 2:13; Mark 10:45; I Peter 1:18, 19; the whole book of Hebrews, especially 9:1-10:39; Romans 3:24-25; 5:9; I Corinthians 10:16; Colossians 1:19-20; I John 1:7; 4:10; Revelation 1:5; 5:9.

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Series: Christ in the Old Testament

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