

One Sacrifice for Sins Forever

Jared Greer; 7/16/2016; Tri City church of Christ

- I. Why care about Leviticus and the Mosaic sacrificial system?
 - a. No other book in the entire Bible claims inspiration as much as Leviticus does.
 - i. The phrases “I am the LORD,” and “The Lord spoke to Moses saying,” are repeated around 85 times throughout the book.
 - b. Leviticus reveals the nature of God
 - i. As I said before, the theme of the book is “Be Holy for I am Holy”
 - ii. The book reveals to us God’s Holy nature. (11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26)
 - c. It is extremely important to understand the rituals of a people if you want to understand a people.
 - i. If we want to understand the chosen people of God under the Old Covenant and learn from them and their experiences, it is important to understand their rituals and way of life.
 - d. Learning about the sacrificial system of atonement is fundamental in understanding the New Testament and what was accomplished on the cross.
- II. The Offerings of Leviticus (Leviticus 1)
 - a. Burnt Offerings -Offerings where an animal was wholly consumed on the altar
 - b. Grain Offerings -Offerings that were fully non-meat. They were offered as worship
 - c. Peace Offerings - Offerings that were intended to show fellowship between the worshipper and God
 - d. Sin Offerings – Offerings required when a person unintentionally sinned
 - e. Guilt/Trespass Offerings – Offerings required when a person unintentionally sinned and could make restitution for his sin. This focused not only on the harm sin can have on an individual but to others.

- i. These sacrifices could be divided into a category of pleasing/sweet smelling aromas and non-sweet aromas.
- ii. The Burnt Offerings, Grain Offerings, and Peace Offerings were all under the category of pleasing/sweet smelling aromas. (1:9, 2:9, 3:5)
 - 1. This doesn't just mean that they "smelled good"
 - 2. All three of these sacrifices could be offered voluntarily by the individual. The fact that they were offered by the free will of the individual in order to worship God, and thankfully restore a relationship with Him is pleasing.
 - 3. These sacrifices were a shadow of what was to come in Jesus (Hebrews 10:1)
 - 4. Christ was offered up as the ultimate fragrant offering (Ephesians 5:1-2) because he willingly offered himself to God for us.

III. What did this system of atonement mean to the Israelites?

- i. The sacrifices and restitution illustrated to the Israelites and to us the nature of sin.
 - 1. Blood atones for sin and life is in the blood (Lev. 17:11)
 - a. When an Israelite sacrificed an animal they were reminded through this process of atonement that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23)
 - b. For burnt offerings, peace offerings, and sin offerings, it was required that the offender lay his hands on the animal before it was killed. This was done to show the identification of the one offering with the animal that is being killed. (Lev. 1:4)
 - c. Sin causes spiritual death so a life must be given to regain spiritual life. There is a connection between the sinner and the animal, the victim of the offering.
 - d. The same is true about the nature of sin and atonement for us today! Sin leads to death and we must come into contact with the victim who died to atone for our sins, Jesus Christ.

2. Restitution illustrated that sin is a debt (Matthew 6:12, 14-15)
3. Christ is the ultimate and perfect fulfillment of sacrifice, restitution and atonement that are shown to us in Leviticus (Hebrews 10:1-14)
 - a. He was one sacrifice for sins forever
 - b. He was our sin and guilt offering (Hebrews 13:11-13; Isaiah 53:10)
 - c. But why was it necessary for the innocent Christ to become our sin and guilt offerings? Our sacrifice for sins forever?

IV. What could Christ accomplish that the Levitical system of atonement could not?

- a. The Israelites eventually lost all heart in their worship (Isaiah 1:1-18) and eventually thought that going through the motions and sacrificing was all that was required to please God, and a heart for God wasn't required.
 1. God's delight is not in the physical blood, but in what the blood represents (Psalm 51:16-17). The physical blood doesn't atone for our sins, but rather what the blood stands for!
 2. In sacrificing an animal, the blood that was laid at God's feet and dedicated to him, represented the sinner's renewed, complete, and whole-hearted dedication and humility to God.
 3. This doesn't mean God didn't want sacrifices; he commanded His people to offer them! But when they offered sacrifices without changing their hearts, their sacrifice no longer had value and did not atone for their sin!
- b. Romans 8:1-8; The Old Law pointed to and symbolized the change and repentance of the sinner but it could not transform the sinner, because it lacked the Spirit of God. New life comes from the Spirit
 - i. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3 that he must be born again by water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom and be right with God.

V. What was it about Christ's sacrifice that perfected these problems?

- a. Many people today hold to the idea that our sin was primarily a legal issue. Our sin breaks God's law and divine justice requires that death is the punishment for sin. Jesus took on flesh and suffered the punishment of death for the entire human race.
- b. This is called the "penal substitution theory." There are elements of truth in this theory, but there are a few problems one could find with it as well.
 - i. Jesus' death does not seem just in any way. The sinners live and are rewarded, and the only truly innocent man is put to death. This doesn't seem to be just at all.
 - ii. This theory doesn't seem to make Christ's sacrifice personal. It doesn't provide us with any reason to follow Christ, and become his disciple. Nothing in this theory necessitates discipleship.
- c. So what was it that made the death of Christ so unique, perfectly and ultimately fulfilling the doctrine of sacrifice and atonement found in Leviticus?
 - i. His death showed us what whole-hearted dedication to God looks like.
 - ii. The commitment needed for a sinner to achieve atonement for their sin is shown in Christ's death. He embodied discipleship.
 - iii. A professor at Florida College, Dr. McClister, gives this example to help explain what was accomplished on the cross.
 1. When he used to teach a foreign language class, he had a worksheet where his students had to convert sentence types. He would do the first problem on the worksheet to show them how to do the assignment. The first one was done "for them," but in order to complete the assignment, they had to follow that example to the end.
 2. Jesus similarly died *for us*! He took the form of a servant, substituting himself in the place of mankind, and providing an example for us to follow that Levitical sacrifices could never accomplish!
 3. His sacrifice has the power to change our hearts and call us to complete discipleship, even to the point of death. His death doesn't mean that I no longer have any

responsibility in the matter, but rather, I will achieve atonement when I follow His example and dedicate all that I am to God!

4. 1 Peter 1:21-25

- a. In this passage Peter draws a direct connection between Jesus suffering for us and leaving us an example.
- b. He also borrows language and phraseology from Isaiah 53; the passage with the strongest language depicting Jesus as our substitution. He interprets it in a way that emphasizes Jesus' commitment to God, and our need to die to sin and become righteous in following after His example.

5. But Jesus is more than just an example to us. He is *the* example. He lived a sinless life. His life in its entirety was devoted to God and he chose to die for us willingly (which is why his sacrifice is a pleasing aroma)

VI. So what should we do to achieve the atonement offered in Christ?

- a. We need to believe in the gospel. Jesus did indeed die for us, was buried, and rose three days later.
- b. We need to confess that He is the son of God (Romans 10:9-10)
- c. We need to repent; turn away from sin and turn to Him with all of our heart, following his example of commitment and dedication to the will of God.
 - i. This is important! If we don't change our hearts and follow the example Christ set before us and dedicate ourselves to God, our sin isn't atoned for (like the Israelites in Isaiah)
 - ii. This goes along with what the Hebrew writer says in 10:26; *For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,*
- d. We must come identify with Christ, our victim, and His death; just as the Israelites had to lay their hands on their sacrifices. How do we come into contact with Christ and His death? Romans 6:1-11

- e. After we rise to walk in newness of life, we need to continue following his example to the very end; otherwise there is no atonement for our sin.