

CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE- PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

DHW BIBLE CLASS LESSON 3 LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 4 & 5

INTRODUCTION

The first three chapters describe the burnt offering, the grain offering and the peace offering. Chapters 4 & 5 introduce two more types of offerings -- the sin offering and the trespass or guilt offering. The sin offering focused on the worshipper's sin that was God-wards, whereas the trespass or guilt offering focused on the sin that was man-wards. These five offerings formed the standard or basic sacrifices unto the LORD.

This study will increase our understanding of the nature, the seriousness and the effects of sin. We can draw valuable principles that will help us lead a life that is pleasing and acceptable before the LORD our God. We will also learn more about God and His will.

Chapter 4 deals with sins that were particularly God-wards, whereas chapter 5 deals with sins that were man-wards. One oft repeated phrase is "the priest shall make an atonement" concerning a person's sin. This reminds us that there is forgiveness of sins but it can only be obtained in God's prescribed way. There is no other way but His way: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man comes to the Father but by Me" (John 14:6).

OUTLINE

- A. The LORD spoke to Moses concerning the commitment of anyone who sinned (4:1-2).
The person who sinned through ignorance must purify himself.

- B. If the priest sinned, he must offer a young bullock for a sin offering (4:3-12).
 - 1. The priest sinned (vv.3,4).
 - a. Bring the bullock to the door of the tabernacle.
 - b. Lay his hand on the head of the bullock.
 - c. Kill the bullock before the LORD.
 - 2. The priest had to (vv.4:5-12).
 - a. Dip his finger in the blood, sprinkle it seven times before the veil of the sanctuary.
 - b. Stain the horns of the altar of incense.
 - c. Pour the remainder of the blood at the bottom of the brazen altar.
 - d. Burn all the fat, kidneys and liver on the brazen altar.
 - e. Burn the skin, all its flesh, its head, its legs, its inward parts and dung, even the whole bullock in a clean place outside the camp.

- C. If the whole congregation sinned, it must offer a young bullock for a sin offering (4:13-21).
1. The congregation of Israel sinned (vv.13-15).
 - a. The guilt discovered.
 - b. Offer a young bullock.
 - c. Bring it before the tabernacle.
 - d. The elders lay their hands on the head of the bullock before the LORD.
 - e. Kill the bullock.
 2. The priest then attended to the offering (vv.16-21).
 - a. Bring the blood to the tabernacle.
 - b. Dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle the veil seven times.
 - c. Stain the horns of the incense altar with blood.
 - d. Pour the rest of the blood at the bottom of the brazen altar.
 - e. Burn all the fat on the altar.
 - f. Do the same as with the rest of the bullock as he did for the sin offering.
- D. If a ruler sinned, he must offer a he-goat for a sin offering (4:22-26).
1. The ruler sinned (vv.22-24)).
 - a. Bring a male goat without blemish.
 - b. Lay his hand on the head of the goat.
 - c. Kill the goat before the Lord.
 2. After that the priest attended to it (vv.25, 26).
 - a. Stains the horns of the brazen altar.
 - b. Pour the rest of the blood at the bottom of the brazen altar.
 - c. Burn all the fat similar to the fat offered in the peace offering on the brazen altar.
 3. Atonement for him was made and his sin was forgiven (v.26b).
- E. If an ordinary person sinned, he must offer a she-goat or a lamb for a sin offering (4:27-35).
1. The ordinary person sinned (vv.27-29).
 - a. Bring a she-goat without blemish.
 - b. Lay his hand on the head of the goat.
 - c. Slay the goat at the brazen altar.
 2. The priest then attended to it (vv.30, 31a).
 - a. Stain the horns of the altar of sweet incense with blood.
 - b. Pour the rest of the blood at the bottom of the altar.
 - c. Burn all the fat similar to the fat taken for the peace offerings on the brazen altar.
 3. Atonement was made and his sin was forgiven (v.31b)
- F. If a soul sinned in omission, he must offer a trespass offering (5:1-13).
1. The nature of the sin (vv.1-4).

- a. Failure to be a material witness to a crime.
 - b. Touching an unclean animal or human uncleanness.
 - c. Swearing carelessly.
2. The person who sinned (vv.5-7).
 - a. Confess his guilt.
 - b. Bring a female lamb or a he goat to the priest.
 - c. Or bring two turtledoves or two pigeons, one for burnt offering and the other for a sin offering.
 3. The priest then attended to it (vv.8-10).
 - a. Offer the first pigeon as a sin offering.
 - Wring the head off the pigeon.
 - Divide not the pigeon.
 - Sprinkle the blood on the side of the brazen altar.
 - Pour the rest of the blood at the bottom of the altar.
 - b. Offer the other pigeon as a burnt offering.
 - Do the same as he did to the first pigeon.
 - Atonement was made in his behalf and his sin was forgiven (v.10).
 4. If he was poor, he could still offer a sin offering (vv.11-13).
 - a. Bring a tenth of an ephah of fine flour.
 - b. Pour neither oil nor frankincense on it.
 - c. Bring to the priest.
 5. The priest then attended to it (vv.12, 13).
 - a. Take a token portion of the fine flour.
 - b. Burn it on the altar.
 - c. Atonement was made in behalf of the worshipper whose sin was forgiven.
 - d. The rest of the meal was given to the priest as a grain offering.

COMMENTARY

The Sin Offering

What is sin? The Hebrew word means to “miss, miss the way, sin, incur guilt.”¹ The text reads: “If a soul shall sin through ignorance . . .,” which literally means, “when a person unwittingly commits an offence”. The nature of the ignorance is twofold: (1) not knowing the facts of the law itself, in which case the offender might be unaware that the act is in violation of the law; and (2) not aware of the nature of the act, meaning that the offender thinks that the act itself is permitted.² In both cases when the person becomes aware that he has violated the law of God, his sin can be atoned for or expiated by the giving of a sin offering.

When A Priest Sins

When a priest sinned, he had to bring a young unblemished bullock as a sin offering. In the listing of offenders,

¹Harris, Archer, Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT)*, vol. 1:277.

²Baruch A. Levine, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Leviticus*, (New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), p. 19.

the priest was mentioned first; then the congregation, the ruler, and the common people. The reason for singling out the priest first is obvious. Being an anointed or ordained priest, he was a mediator between God and man. His responsibilities and duties were very great and grave. The repercussion of his sin was not confined to him only but would affect the entire assembly of people over whom he had the oversight. It was serious in this respect. That was why he was mentioned first. This principle also applies today. When a pastor, elder, deacon, deaconess, or any church leader sins, the effect of his or her sin is greater and graver than that of an ordinary member. James stated this clearly (James 3:1,2a), *“My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all”*.

The seriousness of the priest's sin was also reflected in the requirement of the sin offering. He must offer a young bullock without blemish. The bullock was the most valuable and costly animal in comparison with the goat, lamb, and the pigeons.

An important act that the priest had to do was to sprinkle the veil, which separated the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place, with the blood seven times. Then he had to stain the horns of the altar of sweet incense with the blood. This was also done in the sin offering in behalf of the congregation. The significance of this act was to purify the sanctuary which was the place for worshipping God and which had been defiled by the sin of the priest. God who is holy cannot dwell in an unclean place. This is an important lesson for us. As born-again Christians, we are the temple of God, where God the Holy

Spirit indwells. Like the sin offering of the priest that atoned for his sin, the Lord Jesus Christ has atoned for all our sins, thus cleansing us so that God can live in us. However, since God is holy, and God hates sin, it behoves us to walk righteously before Him.

The rest of the blood was poured at the bottom of the brazen altar. All the fat and the organs that were taken as in the peace offering were burnt at the altar. But the skin, all the flesh of the bullock, its head and legs and his inwards and his dung, even the whole bullock were carried out of the camp to a clean place to be burned. The place “without the camp” is significant. It was a prophetic picture of the coming Lamb of God who would be crucified outside the city of Jerusalem where the Temple stood (Hebrews 13:11, 12).³

The Congregation Sin

It may seem at first that the offender was required to make a sin sacrifice only if the sin was made known, otherwise he was not guilty. This, however, is not the intention of the passage. The fact that the offender was unaware of his sin did not negate his guilt. The state of guilt was determined and declared by God and not by when the offender realised that he had committed a sin. When the offender realised, however, a sin offering must be made to atone for his sin in order to receive forgiveness (4:20).

All the rituals for the sin offering in behalf of the congregation were the same as those imposed upon the priest.

³ Hebrews 13:11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. 12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

This in itself showed the gravity of the sin—that not only the people needed to be cleansed but also the sanctuary! How does a whole congregation sin against God? An example was given by the prophet Malachi where the Israelites robbed God of His tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:8, 9). The Israelites also had spoken words against God by saying, “it is vain to serve God” (Malachi 3:14-15).⁴

A Leader Sins

When a leader sinned, he could offer a he-goat without blemish for a sin offering. He might be a leader of the clan or tribe. He had to lay his hand on the head of the goat and kill it at the brazen altar before the LORD. The priest then had to stain the horns of the brazen altar (not the altar of incense as in the case of the priest and the congregation). The sin sacrifice would atone for his sin and his sin would be forgiven.

An Ordinary Person Sins

When an individual member of the Israelites sinned, he could bring a female goat or a female lamb for the sin offering. The rites were the same as the sin offering for the leader except that the gender of the animal was different. The female goat and lamb were less costly than the male counterparts.

It was mentioned that the sin offering was a sweet savour unto the LORD. In what way was it a sweet

aroma to the LORD? The amount of blood reflected the utter holiness of God and the utter seriousness of sin. All these sacrifices served to restore the fellowship of the worshipper to God through his confession and consecration. That was well pleasing in the sight of God. This tells us that God desires the fellowship of His children. Indeed, even today for He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Let us offer a sacrifice of a sweet aroma unto the LORD by offering ourselves a living sacrifice unto Him and by offering the sacrifice of praise and thanks to God continually (Romans 12:1; Hebrews 13:15).

The Trespass Offering

We now come to the fifth type of sacrifice for sin. It is called the trespass offering unto the LORD (5:6). The Hebrew word translated “trespass” literally means “guilt”. The trespass offering was offered as a *sin offering*. The offender had to bring a female lamb or goat and the priest would make atonement for the offender. If he could not afford a lamb for his trespass offering (v.7), he could offer two turtledoves or two young pigeons unto the LORD; one for a *sin offering* and the other for a *burnt offering*. The rituals of these two offerings were as described previously. The offender and the priest who ministered these sacrifices knew precisely what to do. And if he could not afford even the two turtledoves or pigeons, he could offer “the tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering.” He must not mix it with oil or put any frankincense, unlike the grain offering of a sweet aroma unto the LORD (v.11). The priest shall make a sin offering in behalf of the offender. It would be atonement for him concerning his sin and he would be forgiven (v.13). The

⁴ Malachi 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. . . . 14 Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts? 15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.

amazing grace of these provisions was that everyone could offer a sin offering for his sin. No one was deprived. This is also true of the forgiveness of sin today through our LORD Jesus Christ. No one needs to do any good or great works to have his sins washed away and be forgiven by God. It takes only the individual's willingness to repent and confess his sin, and to accept the death of Christ Jesus as his sin offering in order to be forgiven by God!

The sins, which were mentioned here, were committed as a result of negligence or thoughtlessness on the part of the offender rather than sins, which were expressly forbidden.⁵ Four such sins were listed. The first kind concerned a person who knew of the guilt of another person (the offender) who tried to hide his guilt by taking an oath to the contrary. If this person kept silent when witnesses were called to testify, then he would be guilty of the sin of omission—knowing what should be done but not doing it. James affirmed this (James 4:17), “*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin*”.

The second kind concerned a man who was contaminated by a dead animal and was unaware of it, he would be declared unclean and guilty.

The third kind was related to the second. If a person touched “the uncleanness of man” he would be defiled and guilty. Human uncleanness would include such impurities as a woman after childbirth (12:2); a person with a bodily discharge (15:2); a man who had sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman (18:19). If any unclean thing touched a person, it

rendered the person unclean. But the reverse was not true. If a clean thing touched an unclean person, it would not make the unclean person clean.

The fourth kind concerned a person who thoughtlessly or carelessly swore to do something (it did not matter whether he had sworn to do something good or bad) without considering whether he could keep the oath or not. He was guilty of sin and must offer a trespass offering.

PRACTICAL VALUE

God has made it very clear that He is holy and that He does not tolerate sin. A person who commits a sin is guilty and must atone for it in order to be forgiven. God also reveals that He is a merciful and gracious God who desires that the sinner repents and atones for his sin. The prescribed sin offerings and trespass offerings with choices of less costly offerings show clearly that God makes it possible for everyone to atone for his sins and be forgiven. Sin is sin and the sinner must be punished by God but there is also deliverance from the punishment of God if the sinner is willing to follow the way prescribed by Him. Today, the only sin offering that we need to bring to God is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away all the sins of the world once and for all. Praise the LORD.

AMEN

⁵ Noordtjij, 63.

**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

Monday: Leviticus 4:1-12; Romans 3:20; 1 John 3:4-5.

Tuesday: Leviticus 4:13-21; Malachi 3:7-15; Hebrews 13:11-13.

Wednesday: Leviticus 4:22-26; Romans 7:19-25.

Thursday: Leviticus 4:27-35; 1 John 1:8-2:1-6.

Friday: Leviticus 5:1-13; Proverbs 31:8-9; Ecclesiastes 5:1-7; Haggai 2:10-14.

Discussion Questions

1. How would you define "sin"?

2. What is the occasion and purpose of the sin offering?

3. What does the sin offering teach us about "sin through ignorance" or unintentional sin?

4. The priest must offer a young bullock for a sin offering. Why was the bullock chosen?

5. In what way is it costly when the congregation sins?

6. Under what circumstance would the elders of the congregation have to offer a sin offering?

7. Why was the bullock burned outside the camp?

8. What is the difference between the sin offering of the ruler and that of the common people?

9. Verse 31 adds that the sin offering was also a sweet aroma to the LORD. What does this tell us?

10. What happens if a person touches an unclean or unholy thing? What happens if an unclean person touches a clean or holy thing? How does this principle apply to Christians today?

11. Can you name some examples of sins of omission?

12. What is the phrase that is repeated nine times in chapters 4 and 5? What does the phrase mean?
