

Sacrifice and Atonement

Week 6 OT HIStory

September 15, 2013

DAY 1: Sacrifice in the Unfolding Old Testament Story

1. Reading Genesis and Exodus leads us to two conclusions: (1) Mankind runs from God to almost anything in an attempt to make life "work." None of these attempts are successful. Instead, more messes are made. (2) God has tried almost "everything" to turn man around: Creation, Eden, the perfect life, a beautiful companion, freedom to live, a new land, a new nation, freedom from slavery, deliverance from Egypt and the army, and the 10 Commandments, literally, "etched in stone." Nothing has fixed man's sin.

2. How can a holy God EVER allow unholy people, who consistently and persistently turn away from Him to enjoy relationship with Himself? How can an unholy man become holy? How can an unholy man ever appreciate and strive for holiness when that is the last thing he wants?

3. The sacrifice for sin is begun in the Old Testament. So is the "Atonement." Atonement is what God does to make us right with Himself. Think of it as "at-one-ment."

4. Let's look at the another story of Abraham.

*Genesis 22:1 Some time later **God tested Abraham**. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. ² Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. **Sacrifice** him there as a **burnt offering** on one of the mountains I will tell you about."*

5. What seemed to be required to atone for sin? _____

⁶ *Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, ⁷ Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" ⁸ Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son...."*

⁹ *When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. ¹² "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." ¹³ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket **he saw a ram** caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and **sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son**. ¹⁴ So Abraham called that place **The LORD Will Provide**. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."*

6. What was used for the sacrifice for sin?

7. What do you think is the significance of blood being necessary for the forgiveness of sin?

8. What is the significance of a "substitute" being used to atone for sin?

9. What was Abraham's conclusion about what happened? (v. 14)

10. It is impossible for man to atone for his own sin. How does God solve this problem?

DAY 2: Sacrifice in the law of Moses

1. Have you heard someone say, "My good deeds will outweigh my bad ones," or, "I need to atone for my sin." What do those beliefs assume about:

* Sin?

* Human nature?

2. In an attempt to show the seriousness of sin, God says that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin." What strikes you about that statement.

Leviticus 17:11 For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

3. Imagine yourself as a citizen of Israel in those days. When you sin, you are required to take an unblemished animal to the priest. He will slit its throat. The blood of the slain animal will be sprinkled on the altar on your behalf.

The procedure would have been smelly, messy, and bloody.

What *should* be the affect on you, the worshipper?

4. The human tendency is to minimize our own sin. How should the sacrificial system be the antidote to minimizing sin?

5. The animal that died in your place was innocent of sin. You were guilty of sin. What *should* be the effect of an innocent dying for you, the guilty?

6. What pictures of the sacrificial system foreshadow the sacrifice of Jesus for our sin?

7. Summarize the change of perspective we need to see our sin rightly.

DAY 3: The Day of Atonement

1. Underline everything that strikes you about how the Day of Atonement is to be celebrated...

Leviticus 16:2 The LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover. ³ "This is how Aaron is to enter the sanctuary area: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. ⁴ He is to put on the sacred linen tunic, with linen undergarments next to his body; he is to tie the linen sash around him and put on the linen turban. These are sacred garments; so he must bathe himself with water before he puts them on. ⁵ From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. ⁶ "Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household. ⁷ Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. ⁸ He is to cast lots for the two goats--one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat. ⁹ Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the LORD and sacrifice it for a sin offering. ¹⁰ But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert as a scapegoat. ¹¹ "Aaron shall bring the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household, and he is to slaughter the bull for his own sin offering. ¹² He is to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the LORD and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and take them behind the curtain. ¹³ He is to put the incense on the fire before the LORD, and the smoke of the incense will conceal the atonement cover above the Testimony, so that he will not die. ¹⁴ He is to take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover. ¹⁵ "He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. ¹⁶ In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. He is to do the same for the Tent of Meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness. ¹⁷ No one is to be in the Tent of Meeting from the time Aaron goes in to make atonement in the Most Holy Place until he comes out, having made atonement for himself, his household and the whole community of Israel. ¹⁸ "Then he shall come out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement for it. He shall take some of the bull's blood and some of the goat's blood and put it on all the horns of the altar. ¹⁹ He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites. ²⁰ "When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the Tent of Meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. ²¹ He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites--all their sins--and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the desert in the care of a man appointed for the task. ²² The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place; and the man shall release it in the desert. ²³ "Then Aaron is to go into the Tent of Meeting and take off the linen garments he put on before he entered the Most Holy Place, and he is to leave them there. ²⁴ He shall bathe himself with water in a holy place and put on his regular garments. Then he shall come out and sacrifice the burnt offering for himself and the burnt offering for the people, to make atonement for himself and for the people. ²⁵ He shall also burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar. ²⁶ "The man who releases the goat as a scapegoat must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp. ²⁷ The bull and the goat for the sin offerings, whose blood was brought into the Most Holy Place to make atonement, must be taken outside the camp; their hides, flesh and offal are to be burned up. ²⁸ The man who burns them must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp. ²⁹ "This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must deny yourselves and not do any work--whether native-born or an alien living among you-- ³⁰ because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the LORD, you will be clean from all your sins. ³¹ It is a sabbath of rest, and you must deny yourselves; it is a lasting ordinance. ³² The priest who is anointed and ordained to succeed his father as high priest is to make atonement. He is to put on the sacred linen garments ³³ and make atonement for the Most Holy Place, for the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and for the priests and all the people of the community. ³⁴ "This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites." And it was done, as the LORD commanded Moses.

DAY 4: The Problem with Animal Sacrifice

1. Yesterday we saw one goat was slaughtered and its blood used for sacrifice for sin. The other goat was taken away from the camp and released by itself in the wilderness as the scapegoat. What strikes you about the scapegoat?

2. Animal sacrifice lasted throughout the O.T. period. It contained some "loopholes" which actually circumvented real repentance and worship.

Hosea 6:1 "Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. ² After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence. ³ Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth."

3. How does the response of the people in vv. 1-3 sound to you? Does this sound like repentance and worship?

4. Read the next verses in this passage...

Hosea 6:4 "What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah? Your love is like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears. ⁵ Therefore I cut you in pieces with my prophets, I killed you with the words of my mouth; my judgments flashed like lightning upon you. ⁶ For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings."

5. What is God's take on their words, in Hosea 6:4?

6. The problems God sees are extremely serious! What has God already tried in efforts to fix these people's sin nature? (Hosea 6:5)

7. The people turned animal sacrifice into a ritual devoid of repentance. They would gladly go through religious motions in "exchange" or "instead of" really repenting of sin and changing their ways. What strikes you from Hosea 6:6? _____

8. In the next passage underline the differences between how the people see worship and how God sees it:

*Malachi 1:6 "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty. "It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name. "But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?' ⁷ "You place defiled food on my altar. "But you ask, 'How have we defiled you?' "By saying that the LORD's table is contemptible. ⁸ When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice **crippled or diseased animals**, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty. ⁹ "Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?"--says the LORD Almighty. ¹⁰ "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands. ¹¹ My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty. ¹² "But you profane it by saying of the Lord's table, 'It is defiled,' and of its food, 'It is contemptible.'" ¹³ **And you say, 'What a burden!' and you sniff at it contemptuously,**" says the LORD Almighty. "When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?" says the LORD. ¹⁴ **"Cursed is the cheat** who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the LORD Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations."*

DAY 5: The Ultimate Sacrifice

1. A series of contrasts are made between the Old Testament sacrificial system and Christ's sacrifice. Underline what is unique about Christ's sacrifice:

Hebrews 9:11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. ¹⁵ Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. ¹⁶ For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. ¹⁷ For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. ¹⁸ Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. ¹⁹ For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, ²⁰ saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." ²¹ And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. ²² Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. ²³ Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. ²⁵ Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, ²⁶ for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

2. This week's study uncovers human nature in some specific ways. Below is a list of those ways. Next to each one, place a number, 1-10, as to your awareness of this problem in you. A "1" means you are in the same dilemma as the people. A "10" means you see this as a huge problem in you.

- ___ Blindness to their own sin,
- ___ A refusal to take sin seriously,
- ___ Defensive about sin when it is pointed out by God or anyone
- ___ Refusal to see sin as God saw it.
- ___ You're willing to be "religious" in response to sin, but not repentant.

3. From Hebrews 9:11-28, what most struck you about who Christ is and what He did for us?

4. Take a few minutes to thank Jesus Christ for His sacrifice in your behalf. Praise God for His long-suffering with us.