

Christ on the Cross, part 4

Jesus as Our Sacrifice (New Covenant Sacrifice)

“...Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” Ephesians 5:2

Blood of the Old Covenant

Blood is an unpleasant subject to many because it brings to mind suffering and death. Curiously, the Bible is a book literally filled with blood. On 362 occasions the Old Testament speaks of blood, most often referring to sacrifices and death by violence. The New Testament also speaks of blood 92 times, most commonly in reference to violent death. Much of the Bible’s teaching about blood is in relation to the hundreds of appearances of related issues such as the Temple, priesthood, fire, and smoke.

The shedding of blood and animal sacrifice likely began with God, after the sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve, as God covered their nakedness and shame with the skin of an animal (Genesis 3:21). Other sacrifices were offered by Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Job (Gen. 4:1-5; 8:20; 22:3, 13; 26:25; 33:20; 35:7; Job 1:5). Perhaps the most insightful sacrifice was done by Abraham in place of Isaac, where it was promised that one day, through Jesus, God would provide the ultimate sacrifice (Gen. 22:14).

Blood was again shed in Exodus at the Passover (Ex. 12:1-30), which was commemorated each year with the Feast of Passover. Later, sacrifices were only conducted by priests at the temple (Deut. 12:5-14) according to strict protocol (Leviticus 1-7).

Israel practiced some eleven public sacrifices that were both animal (cattle, sheep, goats, doves, pigeons) and non-animal (wheat, barley, olive oil, wine, frankincense). In total there were four kinds of sacrifices: burnt, peace, sin, and guilt. In addition to the morning and evening daily sacrifices, there was the Day of Atonement, when the High Priest would enter the Most Holy Place to make atonement for the sins of the whole nation (Lev. 23:27; 25:9).

The process of animal sacrifice was an incredibly personal confession of sin. First, an unblemished animal was chosen, symbolizing perfection. Second, the worshipper would draw near the animal that was to be substituted in place of the worshipper. Third, the worshipper would lay hands on the animal to identify with it, confessing their sins in repentance over the animal. Fourth, the animal was then killed and its blood shed as the penalty for sin.

Nonetheless, the Old Testament practice of sacrificial atonement was declared by God to be **insufficient** for the remission of sin (Psalm 40:6; 51:16; Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6-8; Hebrews 10:4). This is because those sacrifices were only **preparatory in anticipation** of the death of Jesus (Jeremiah 31:34b; Heb. 8:3-13). Additionally, the Old Covenant practice of sacrifice was often undertaken by people who did not truly love God in their hearts and instead had only an outward faith (Proverbs 7 especially verse 14; Proverbs 15:8; Psalm 51:17; Hosea 6:6; 1 Samuel 15:21-22).

Blood of the New Covenant

Because the bloodshed of animals in the Old Covenant was insufficient, Jesus was sent to shed His blood as our God-man who atones for our sin and bring us into the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 7:22).

1. Therefore, Jesus is our Great High Priest who is in every way superior to all the priests of the Old Covenant (Heb. 2:17; 4:14-15).
2. He laid down his life as the Lamb of God who takes away our sins (John 1:29).
3. He is our Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7),
4. who has saved us from sin and death by His blood (1 Peter 1:18-19)
5. that was shed once to forgive all sin (Heb. 9:26; 10:10).

Today, there is no longer a Temple, priesthood, or sacrificial system since the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. But in the New Covenant

1. our **body is the temple** of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) and
2. **Christians are a priesthood** of believers (1 Pet. 2:9).
3. As Christians, we do not offer animal sacrifices but do **celebrate the sacrifice of Jesus in communion** (1 Cor. 10:14-22).
 - a. And we do offer our lives (Romans 12:1-2),
 - b. good deeds (Heb. 13:16),
 - c. money (Philippians 4:18),
 - d. and worshipful singing (Heb. 13:15)
as living sacrifices to Jesus.

Psalm 40:6 Sacrifice and offering you have not desired, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

Psalm 51:16 For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.

Micah 6:6 What Does the LORD Require?

"With what shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?

7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,

with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"
8 He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Hebrews 10:1 Christ's Sacrifice Once for All

For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.² Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sin?³ But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin every year.⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Jeremiah 31:31 The New Covenant

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Hebrews 8:1 Jesus, High Priest of a Better Covenant

Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,² a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.³ For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer.⁴ Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law.⁵ They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain."⁶ But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.⁷ For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.

Mosaical Sacrificial System

Name of Offering	Reference	Offered	Occasion	Purpose
Burnt Offering	Leviticus 1; 6:8-13	Bull, ram, male goat, male dove, or young pigeon without blemish (depending on economic status)	<i>Regular</i> - every morning and evening, Sabbath - double offering; Also at New Moon; 3 great festivals; Day of Atonement; feast of Trumpets. <i>Special</i> - consecration of priests, removal of ceremonial uncleanness, cleansing of lepers, purification of women, Conclusion of Nazarite vow or breach in vow, etc. <i>Freewill</i> - any solemn occasion: dedication of Tabernacle or Temple.	Entire surrender to God; Devotion & commitment
Grain Offering Also known as Meal or Tribute Offering	Leviticus 2; 6:14-23; 7:11	Flour, bread or grain made with olive oil and salt (unleavened) or incense. Accompanied by wine	<i>Public</i> - 12 loaves of the bread of the Presence and on the 2nd day of Passover; two wave loaves at Pentecost. <i>Private</i> - High Priest daily offering; consecration of priests; in substitution for a sin offering (poverty); jealousy (Numbers 5:15). <i>In conjunction with burnt or peace offerings.</i>	General thankfulness for first fruits; Acknowledgment that all things come from God
Peace Offering Types of offerings: Thank, Fellowship, Vow, Votive or Freewill Offering	Leviticus 3; 7:11-36; 22:17-30; 27	Male or female animal without blemish according to wealth (blemished allowed for Freewill Offering)	<i>Public</i> - festive inauguration - kings; feast of Pentecost; appointed festivals. <i>Private</i> - free impulse; unexpected blessing; fulfillment of vow; Seek special blessing; general thankfulness.	Symbolizes fellowship with God - Well-being
Sin Offering	Leviticus 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30; 12:6-8	Priest or congregation: bull; king: he goat; individual: she goat, lamb, dove, pigeon or flour (econ. status) all without blemish.	<i>Regular</i> - new moon; Passover; Pentecost; feast of Trumpets; feast of Tabernacles; Day of Atonement; consecration of Priests. <i>Special</i> - individual sin of ignorance; ceremonial defilement - women, leprosy, physical discharges, etc.	Penalty or offering for unintentional sin; For propitiation and atonement; General Redemption
	<i>Numbers 19:1-10</i>	<i>Red Heifer</i>	<i>Unclean after contact with the dead</i>	<i>Purification from Sin</i>
Guilt Offering	Leviticus 5:14 - 6:7; 7:1-6; 14:12-18	Ram or lamb without blemish	Special sins - Withholding of any sacrifice (that which belongs to God); fraud; suppression of truth; perjury; rape of a betrothed slave; purification of a leper	Ransom for a special wrong; For the injury of sin

