

Discipleship:
An
Introduction to
Systematic Theology and
Apologetics

The Doctrines of Redemption: The Law

The Heights Church May 14, 2017

The Old Testament Sacrificial System

- Since no one could perfectly fulfill every one of the 613 laws there had to be some system to atone for sin if anyone would ever be saved from hell.
- The sacrifices didn't actually save anyone but pointed to the once for all time sacrifice of Jesus.
- The sacrificial system was not a first try by God that didn't work to solve the problem of the Fall. Rather it was a lesson to people that sin is very serious, that God takes it very seriously.
- The whole of the Old Testament, every book, points toward the Great Sacrifice that was to come—that of Jesus' sacrificial giving of His own life on our behalf. **Leviticus 17:11 is the Old Testament's central statement about the significance of blood in the sacrificial system. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life. (Leviticus 17:11)**

The Old Testament Sacrificial System

- A “sacrifice” is defined as the offering up of something precious for a cause or a reason.
- All of the blood sacrifices seen throughout the Old Testament were foreshadowing the true, once-for-all-time sacrifice to come so that the Israelites would never forget that without the blood, there is no forgiveness.
- **This shedding of blood is a substitutionary act.** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:23-26)

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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) 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. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 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. (Hebrews 9:11-14)

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

The Old Testament Sacrificial System

There are three basic subjects we need to understand about the Old Testament Sacrificial System.

- 1. The different kinds of sacrifices.**
- 2. The Temple**
- 3. The major Jewish Holidays**

The Old Testament Sacrificial System

There are seven basic types of offerings:

- **Sin Offerings**
- **Guilt Offerings**
- **Burnt Offerings**
- **Grain Offerings**
- **Peace (Fellowship) Offerings**
- **Heave and Wave Offerings**
- **Red Heifer Offerings**

The Old Testament Sacrificial System

- These sacrifices were commonly used in conjunction with each other and were carried out on both an individual and a corporate basis.
- The sacrificial system taught the necessity of dealing with sin and, at the same time, demonstrated that God had provided a way for dealing with sin.
- Ultimately the sacrificial system pointed to Christ. It was **gracious** and not a work.
- The prophets spoke harshly about the people's concept of sacrifice. They tended to ignore faith, confession, and devotion, thinking the mere act of sacrifice ensured forgiveness.

The Old Testament Sacrificial System

- **Burnt, Grain and Peace (Fellowship) offerings are consumed by fire causing “an aroma pleasing to the LORD.” They make the person who gives the offering acceptable for worship.**
- **Sin and Guilt offerings are not consumed by fire and pay for the sin of the person making the offering.**
- **In pagan societies offering were made to the gods because the gods needed them. In the OT offerings are made because the people needed them to get “right” with God.**

The Old Testament Sacrificial System – Sin Offerings (Leviticus 4)

- Sin offerings were to be offered for unintentional sins of “shall not” commands and for unintentional failure to perform “thou shall” commands.
- These are sins committed from weakness of the flesh as opposed to those committed defiantly in rebellion against God and his commandments. Defiant sins required removal from the congregation (camp).
- The object of the sin offering was to accomplish **forgiveness** of the sin and **cleansing** from the effects of the sin (ceremonial purification).
- It presupposed consciousness of the sin by the person offering it and most clearly communicated the ideas of propitiation and atonement.

The Old Testament Sacrificial System – Sin Offerings (Leviticus 4)

- **Atonement:** The reconciliation of the enmity between God and humans, ultimately brought about by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, the Messiah.
- **Expiation:** The prefix *ex* means “out of” or “from.” Expiation has to do with removing something or taking something away. In biblical terms, it has to do with taking away guilt through the payment of a penalty or the offering of an atonement.
- **Propitiation:** The prefix *pro* means “for.” Propitiation brings about a change in God’s attitude, so that He moves from being at enmity with us to being for us. Through the process of propitiation, we are restored into fellowship and favor with Him. In a certain sense, propitiation has to do with God’s being appeased.

The Old Testament Sacrificial System – Sin Offerings (Leviticus 4)

- **The sin offering is not mainly about a “sweet aroma” (representing Christ’s own sinless perfections)* but represents Christ standing in the sinner’s place as the perfect sacrifice who was without sin.**
- **The sin offering foreshadows Christ’s substitutionary sacrificial death.**
- **The offerer laid hands on the sacrifice to show the sin to be pardoned was transferred to the sacrifice.**
- **The soul of the offender was represented by the blood.**
- **The alter symbolized power so sprinkling blood on the alter symbolically brought the person within the efficacy of divine grace so that the sin was atoned for.**

*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Ephesians 5:1-2)

The Old Testament Sacrificial System – Sin Offerings (Leviticus 4)

- **The burning of fat was a pleasing aroma to God (God looked upon it favorably). (Leviticus 4:31)**
- **It was symbolic of handing over the better part of the offerer (that is renewable - fat) to the purifying fire of divine holiness and love so that the person might be renewed day to day by the Spirit of the Lord.**

The Old Testament Sacrificial System – Sin Offerings (Leviticus 4)

- **The rules concerning sin offerings are described for the sins of:**
 - 1. The High Priest**
 - 2. The Congregation**
 - 3. A Leader**
 - 4. A Common Person**
- **The higher the rank of the person who sinned the more expensive the sacrifice.**

The Old Testament Sacrificial System – Sin Offerings (Leviticus 4)

The higher the rank of the person who sinned and the greater the offense the more expensive the sacrifice.

- **Young Bull:**

- Consecration of priests and Levites to their office.
- High Priest on the Day of Atonement.
- Sin of the High Priest
- Sin of the congregation.

- **Male Goat:**

- New moon
- Annual festivals
- Dedication of the Tabernacle or Temple
- Sin of a leader

The Old Testament Sacrificial System – Sin Offerings (Leviticus 4)

- **Female Goat:**
 - Sin of a common person.
- **Lamb (one year old):**
 - Nazarite released from a vow.
 - Cleansing of a Leper
- **Turtledove or Young Pigeon:***
 - Purification following discharges.
 - A Nazarite defiled by contact with a dead body.
 - Substitute for an ordinary sin of a common person in the case of poverty.*

* An omer (one tenth of an ephah!) of flour could also be substituted for an ordinary sin of a common person.