

Sacrificial Holiday

Now is the Sacrificial Holiday. For many people the Sacrificial Holiday brings up who knows what memories and feelings. Perhaps it brings to your mind rising up and getting dressed up and kissing the hands of your mother and father. Some remember their grandfather, others their aunt. Do you have a village? Did you used to celebrate the Sacrificial Holiday there? Or were you in the city. Perhaps you remember going to the market with your father and uncle to choose a sheep. Perhaps your father and the seller shaking hands with a big movement.

The Sacrificial Holiday revives memories of family. Sometimes only at holiday times did you see some relatives, a cousin who lives far away, an elderly grandmother who lives in the village. Perhaps there were new grandchildren in your family. You would pinch their cheeks and take their pictures. You laughed. You hugged. You loved. Memories.

Guests would come and neighbors. You greeted one another and said, "Happy Holiday."

The sacrifice would be killed. To skin the animal and prepare the meat was a big job. The whole day you cut and cooked. Memories.

For me, we were every year at my father-in-law's. My father-in-law, that is, my father, would kill two rams. I would go with him to the market. The market was very crowded and you could hardly walk around. There would be some people trying to get a bull on a truck. My father would choose active animals, ones that ran around. We would load the animals up on his nephew's truck and tie them down. Then we went to the place of sacrifice.

In the first years the place of sacrifice was not very convenient but later it was corrected. At last there was a winch and a channel. And lots of water. I would always think about the animals. They would get scared. Somehow they knew what was going to happen. I looked, how would they go to their death? I thought of my own death. How will I go?

What does it mean to sacrifice? What is the meaning of it?

The offering of sacrifice is almost as old as the world itself. When Adam and Eve sinned, they understood they were naked. They sewed fig leaves together as clothes for themselves. But when the Lord confronted them, he gave them other clothes.

Genesis 3:21 Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.

Why did the Lord do this? The Scriptures do not explain why. Were the fig leaves not enough? Or was there a deeper meaning? We don't know for sure but up until this point there had been no death in the universe. The first to sacrifice was the Lord Himself. He didn't give something made from cotton or wool. Why a skin? The Life Giver took an animal's life to do this business. Was there a lesson in it?

Adam and Eve had two sons at first. They were Cain and Abel.

Genesis 4:1-8 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD." ² Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. ³ And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. ⁴ Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, ⁵ but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. ⁶ So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?" ⁷ "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire *is* for you, but you should rule over it." ⁸ Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

It is understood that the sacrificial system was known from very early times. O.K., why didn't the Lord accept Cain's offering? He offered the fruit of the ground as a farmer. As a shepherd, Abel offered some of the first born of the flock. And he brought their fat. It was as if Abel were carrying out some known instructions. That is, it was not something he just made up. Why did he bring the fat?

The Bible doesn't explain this in these verses. In the book of Hebrews we find a more detailed commentary.

Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

First of all, faith is necessary in the essence of offering sacrifice. What kind of faith? Both Cain and Able believed in God. Both made an offering. What was the difference in their faith? There must be an object of faith. Someone says to me, "I believe in God, the prophets and the holy books?" Sooo... Didn't Cain believe in them? He believed in their existence. But in these verses the faith that is being spoken of is not a faith in the existence of those things. True faith is deeper than that.

It means that righteousness is not simple concerned with offering sacrifice or making an offering.

Abraham made sacrifice. In Genesis 22:2 the Bible says that God told Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice. The interesting thing is that He commanded it especially as a burnt offering. What was a burnt offering? Besides the hide, the whole animal was burned. None of it was eaten.

We understand that Abraham knew what a burnt offering was. He had made sacrifice before this event. What did it mean? Wasn't a burnt offering just a big waste? What does a ram cost these days? It isn't small money, is it? These days, how many people would make a burnt offering like

Abraham? Not one bite of meat. The whole animal would burn. There isn't anyone offering sacrifice like Abraham.

In Israel's day, when the sacrifice instructions were given to the people, there was more light shed on the meaning of sacrifice. Actually Abraham and the others before him knew the meaning but the Israelites had lost much knowledge in Egypt.

Leviticus 4:27-31 'If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally by doing *something against* any of the commandments of the LORD *in anything* which ought not to be done, and is guilty, ²⁸ 'or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, then he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed. ²⁹ 'And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering. ³⁰ 'Then the priest shall take *some* of its blood with his finger, put *it* on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour all *the remaining* blood at the base of the altar. ³¹ 'He shall remove all its fat, as fat is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a sweet aroma to the LORD. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.

We see several things in these verses. First, there are various offerings. In the verses it mentions a peace offering. A peace offering was a type of thank offering.

The other offering described was a sin offering. This offering was directly connected with sin and made atonement. The blood of the animal was put on the horns of the altar. What did it mean?

Jeremiah 17:1 "The sin of Judah *is* written with a pen of iron; With the point of a diamond *it is* engraved On the tablet of their heart, And on the horns of your altars,

The blood of the animal was recording the offeror's sin in the sanctuary. That is the sin, by way of blood was transferred to the tabernacle. The fat was burned. The fat represented sin.

So far, we see a link between sin and sacrifice. Adam and Eve sinned. What did God say?

Genesis 2:17 "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

In Israel's sacrificial system there was a connection between sin and death. When they sinned, they needed to make sacrifice.

The prophet Ezekiel makes this clear:

Ezekiel 18:20 "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

Every sacrifice that Abraham made put forth this truth. The wages of sin is death. Just a minute. Whose death was necessary? The one who sinned or the animals? The one who sinned must die.

Hebrews 10:4 For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

O.K., if the sacrifice of an animal cannot provide atonement, what was it necessary? The animal sacrifices pointed to the true sacrifice which would take away sin. The animal sacrifice demonstrated the faith of the offeror.

John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

The moment Adam sinned, he had no right to even one more moment of life. Why didn't he die right away? A substitute was found. A sacrifice was found. What was it?

Revelation 13:8 ...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world

was offered. Jesus existed before this world. This is why He was born of a virgin. He would become our sacrifice. He came to this world and He died on the cross for our sins. Jesus became a perfect sacrifice for us. Eternal life is in Him. Every sacrifice that God commanded reveals Jesus. This is the meaning of sacrifice.

The price of every sin is eternal death. Have you committed sins? Of course, we all have sinned. We deserve eternal death. If that is so, who can save me, us? Jesus Christ.

God did not accept Cain's sacrifice because he had no faith. What did he not believe? He did not believe in Jesus who was the sin offering given by God. Cain thought that for his sin the offering he made of his own choosing would be accepted. But the Lord did not accept it. The Lord would only accept faith in Jesus Christ who is the sin offering.

Abel however believe in Christ who is the offering given by God. Abel also brought the fat because he was sorry for his sins, he repented.

We cannot pay the wages of sin. The price is infinite. God righteousness demands the price be paid. Justice demands it. Jesus paid it for us. Without Him, there is no salvation. Jesus: the world's sacrifice. This is the meaning of sacrifice.