

Levels of Apprehension of the Offerings

According to the Talmud, "there is not atonement without the blood." (Yoma 5a, Zebahim 6a, Menahot 93b)

Hebrews 9:22 - "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

We were redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (**1 Peter 1:19**)

Colossians 1:22 - "...to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight"

i.e. "unblemished and blameless"

That is what a study of the offerings is meant to show us.

Explained From Within to Without

The Book of Leviticus introduces us to the sacrifices, first with the Burnt Offering and proceeding through the others to the Trespass Offering. In essence, it begins from a position in the Holy of Holies and moves out through the Tabernacle, on to the place "outside the camp" where the body of the sin offering was burned on Yom Kippur, and then ultimately out to the wilderness, where the "goat for Azazel" was delivered to his death, bearing our sin.

The Passover sacrifice encompasses all the offerings in embryonic form. The once-a-year Yom Kippur Sin Offering of the two goats illustrates to the greatest extent how Christ covers our sin.

Experienced From Without to Within

We encounter and apprehend the meaning of the offerings experientially in the reverse order.

Our sense of guilt for our actions initially draws us to see Jesus as our Trespass Offering. Then we realize that the problem is deeper, that we ourselves by our very nature are sin, and so we can see Him as the Sin Offering. At this point we are able to enter into the Tabernacle and into his presence with worship and thanksgiving, represented in different ways by the acceptance or "sweet savor" offerings - the Meal Offering, the Burnt Offering and the Peace Offering.

Separate rituals and instructions are described for each offering. Experientially, these details reflect how deep our understanding goes.

For instance, we might understand that we're forgiven, but not understand the real cost in Christ's blood, or that even the "inward parts" of our deepest consciousness,

motivations and compulsions are touched and cleansed by His sacrifice.

In the discussion of the offerings, there is an increasing depiction of our progressive understanding and apprehension of Jesus as we see how He fulfills these offerings in our own experience.

The Spacial Scope

The distance between the blood sprinkled on the mercy seat of the Ark in the Holy of Holies by the High Priest and the scapegoat's delivery off the cliff in the wilderness outside of Jerusalem encompasses the full scope of our apprehension.

By what Christ accomplished on the cross, we can boldly enter in past the torn veil into the Holy of Holies by virtue of His shed blood. But our actual experience and apprehension may find us back in previous "stations" - perhaps even back at the beginning of our journey in Egypt, fearfully "sheltering in place" under the blood of the Passover Lamb as the death angel passes over.

Our journey of faith depends of our repentance as we listen to God's word. His ultimate desire is that we reside in the Promised Land, dwelling with him on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies in the New Jerusalem.

The Tabernacle itself offers a map

At first we are outside the camp, not permitted to set foot inside the Tabernacle where God dwells with Israel. Outside the camp is where the sin offering for the priest and the ruler is burned.

To enter the Tabernacle we first must be Levitically clean

(Christ also accomplished this for us "by the washing of water by the Word")

- Ephesians 5:24-27 - "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

If we approach carrying a sin or trespass offering, we can go through the door and enter the court as far as the Brazen Altar. There we lay hands on the animal's head, confess over it, and kill the sacrifice. The priest takes blood from the sacrifice and applies it to the altar, then puts the inward parts on the altar to be burned.

Once sins and trespasses are covered, we can worship God with the Meal Offering, the Burnt Offering - we know we are accepted by God and a "sweet savor" to him.

Next we can share God's sustenance and communion in the Peace Offering.

To enter into the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, we have to see ourselves as "a kingdom of priests" and apply the blood on the horns of the altar of incense.

Finally, we can boldly follow our High Priest (Christ) into the Holy of Holies and appreciate the Yom Kippur atonement blood of the "goat for the Lord" being sprinkled on the mercy seat, once and for all. We will also see our guilt for every sin borne away by the scapegoat into the wilderness, taking it away "as far as the east is from the west."

Apprehension

"Apprehension" means to "lay hold of" - to understand the extent that we recognize what Christ's sacrifice accomplished in us.

- **Philippians 3:12** - "...I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended (by) Christ Jesus."

- **Ephesians 3:18-19** - That we "May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

Our apprehension increases only with repentance.

The Trespass Offering, for instance, does not mention who kills the offering, whereas the Sin Offering does. The killing of the offering means we understand that we participated in killing Christ as a part of the humanity He died for. That represents a significant progression in our apprehension.

The Trespass Offering requires only one kind of animal - a ram. It mentions the inward parts. But the forgiveness, though complete, is only for the act itself and does not acknowledge the fact that we are sin in our very being.

The progressively increasing detail in the higher grades of the offerings reveal these truths:

What animal is sacrificed? - The sacrifices range in value from "fine flour" to two turtledoves, up through either a female lamb or female kid if the goats, then a female lamb, then a female kid, then a male kid, a finally a bullock. Women in Israel were only required to keep the 365 negative commandments, men all 613 laws. That's why the progression is from female to male. The highest sacrifices - for rulers, the Sanhedrin (congregation) and for the High Priest - shows that sins committed in positions of authority are covered.

Who is named as the offerer? - It progresses from an unnamed "soul" who doesn't yet recognize he is part of the congregation, up to the High Priest, who's identity, in type, is Christ.

What it atones for - There is progress from only a single act of sin or trespass that has

to be constantly repeated, to the once-a-year offering for the "sin nature" of the whole person through the two goats on Yom Kippur. In Christ, this is a once-for-all offering:

"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (**Hebrews 10:10**)

Who kills it? - In the lowest fine flour offering, nothing is killed. In the lower sin offerings, the priest kills the animal, the offerer is just a spectator and dependent on another's faith. In the higher grades, the offerer kills the sacrifice himself - you realize your own sin make you personally responsible for killing Christ on the cross.

Laying on of hands - Not mentioned in the Trespass Offering and the lower grade Sin Offerings. Laying on of hands means you identify with the sacrifice, that you deserve death, and that you realize the offering is bearing your own sins and trespasses.

The Brazen Altar - Mention of it in the higher Sin Offerings means an understanding of the need for God's righteous judgment on sin, and it provides the gateway for access to the rest of the Tabernacle.

Disposition of the blood - There is no blood in the lowest Sin Offering, and confusion about its disposition in the other grades. In the two highest grades the blood is brought into the Holy Place and sprinkled "toward the veil," hinting at our access to the "oracle of God" (**1 Peter 4:11**, **1 Kings 6:16**) and to our position as "seated together in heavenly places" on the mercy seat with Him (**Ephesians 2:6**) in the Holy of Holies, (which is fully seen in the final and comprehensive Sin Offering of Yom Kippur. In that ceremony, the High Priest enters behind the veil with incense, sprinkles the blood seven times toward the mercy seat and utters the Tetragrammaton - the sacred Name). After the blood is sprinkled toward the veil, it is daubed on the horns of the Altar of Incense, denoting recognition that our thoughts (incense) are cleansed, and the rest is taken back out to the Brazen Altar and poured at its base, showing that God's justice is appeased.

Disposition of the fat - The fat represents the best part of the offering. The higher grades describe the fat being burned on the Brazen Altar for God, and shows that our life is not our own, that the sacrifice doesn't "benefit" us - rather we are offered up to God.. The lower grades don't mention the fat.

The Inward Parts - The kidneys, caul, liver and other inward parts represent the center of human thought, will, emotion, according to the Hebrew conception. This is the seat of sin and the origin point for trespass. Mention of them tells us our cleansing and forgiveness penetrate inside us to reach our motivations, hidden thoughts and subconscious compulsions as well as our outward acts. See **1 Corinthians 4:5** - "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." These are burned with the fat on the Brazen Altar - they are given up to God, and are no longer our concern.

Disposition of the body - In the lower grades there is either no body (fine flour) or it is not mentioned. Only in the highest grade of the High Priest's Sin Offering is the directive to burn the body, skin, dung etc, outside the camp mentioned. The "Congregation's" Sin Offering mentions some of this, but not in detail. By burning the body outside the camp it is clear that we are no longer "debtors to the flesh" (**Romans 8:12**) and that "flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (**1 Corinthians 15:50**).

Is it eaten? - The priests usually took and ate a portion of the Trespass and Sin Offerings, not only to assure the people that the sin had been covered but also as a means to support themselves since Levites had no inheritance in the land. But this was not done with the two highest grades of the Sin Offering - for the High Priest and the Congregation (Sanhedrin) as well as the Yom Kippur Sin Offering - See **Leviticus 6:30 and 16:27**. This signifies that in the High Priest position we no longer can minister to ourselves, or think about self in any dimension. The High Priest (Christ) is only concerned about others. (As a nation of priests, we are normally sustained by eating/comprehending our portion of the sacrifices. But the High Priest position here points to the very highest dimension of service and selflessness).

- **Philippians 3:7** - "But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ."

The Yom Kippur Sin Offering

The ultimate offering for sin takes place on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement and is described in **Leviticus 16**.

Mishneh Torah, Laws of Repentance 1.2 - "The Azazel-goat, because it is atoning for all Israel, the High Priest confesses over it in the speech of all Israel, even as it is said: 'And confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel' (**Leviticus 16:21**). **The Azazel-goat, moreover, atones for all transgressions mentioned in the Torah, minor and major, whether one committed it in spite or whether he committed it in error, whether it was done by him knowingly or unknowingly - for all the Azazel-goat atones, provided the sinner repent.**"

Tradition tells us that a red thread would be attached to its horns, half of which was removed before the animal was sent away. If the rite was effective, the red thread would turn to white.

Psalm 103:11-12 - "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us."

Hebrews 9:28 - "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many..."

John 1:29 - "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (In Greek the word for "lamb" can mean either a sheep or a goat).

Romans 6:11 - "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"...Among the ways of repentance are to continue to cry out in tearful supplication before the Name, to bestow alms according to his means, and to distance himself exceedingly from the thing wherein he sinned, **to have his identity changed, as if to say, 'I am now another person, and not that person who perpetrated those misdeed.'**"

- Mishneh Torah on Repentance, Rosh-ha-Shanah, 16b. C.