

July 29, 2018 - Lev. 5:1-6:7 - Sin and Trespass Offering
Torah Reading: Leviticus 5:1-6:7 - Sin and Trespass Offering
Psalm 75
Haftarah: Zechariah 5:3-11 + 6:14

Trespasses and sins are merely the symptom of a greater problem, sin itself as a universal condition or principle at work in all of humanity.

- **Romans 7:17,18** - "So now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwells in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing."

- **Psalm 51:5** - "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

"For there is not a righteous man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." (**Ecclesiastes 7:20**)

- **Romans 3:23** - "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

After the Fall of man in the Garden every person is, in a sense, "sin" in his very being. All sin - intentional and unintentional - is covered / set aside at the Yom Kippur sin offering of the two goats. It was "set aside" annually, looking toward Christ's perfect sacrifice on the cross in which sin is taken away once and for all.

Confusion of the Types of Offerings at the Boundaries

Descriptions of the Sin Offering for unintentional sin (**Leviticus 4**) bleed over into the Trespass Offering in **Leviticus 5**, and the difference between the two is somewhat confused. (Discussion of uncleanness is also mixed in). This is because the transition from apprehending the Trespass Offering for sins we "do" leads incrementally to the understanding that we ourselves *are* sin, through and through. And cleansing is necessary for both.

Leviticus 5:1-13 talks about sin and trespass interchangeably but is still falls in the category of the Sin Offering, whereas **Leviticus 5:14-6:7** is describing the Trespass Offering with its distinctive ram sacrifice and the "20 percent more" compensation payment.

The phrase "trespasses and sins" refers to the acts that we do. Only the annual Sin Offering on Yom Kippur specifically atones fully for the whole person as sin, with the scapegoat bearing away our sin to the wilderness (**Leviticus 16**).

We usually first come to see Jesus as our Trespass Offering, because guilt for our actions is most apparent to us. Only later do we see ourselves as completely sinful and without hope and in need of the Sin Offering.

Romans 4:25 - "Who was delivered for our offenses (*paráptōma* = trespasses), and

was raised again for our justification.."

Christ fulfilled the Trespass Offering

Isaiah 53:10 - "Yet it was the LORD's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer. And when His soul is made an *offering for sin* ('*asham* - a trespass offering), He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand."

Just as the idea of the expiation of sin, which was embodied in the sprinkling of the blood, is most prominent in the Sin Offering; so the idea of satisfaction and compensation for the restoration of rights that have been violated, infringed upon or disturbed comes into the foreground in the Trespass Offering.

Ignoring the 'Oath of testimony'

Leviticus 5:1 - "And if a soul sin (*chata*), and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity (*`avon*)."

"Swearing" here is not cursing, but either hearing a false swearing in testimony or keeping silent when called on to testify.

The guilt here described is that of designed and culpable silence, and of deliberately concealing a crime. Failing to come forward as witness to aid the authorities in maintaining the integrity of the Divine law. A solemn oath was pronounced to the general congregation for anyone having evidence in a case to come forward to testify. If you didn't, you were considered a participant in the crime.

See **Proverbs 29:24** - "Whoso is partner with a thief, hateth his own soul, he heareth cursing (i.e. "the oath" demanded by the judge) and betrayeth it not."

...and **Matthew 26:63** - "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the son of God." ("I adjure thee by the living God" - an example of the same kind of "oath of testimony")

Leviticus 5:2-3 - "Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcass of an unclean beast, or a carcass of unclean cattle, or the carcass of unclean creeping things, and if it be hidden from him; he also shall be unclean, and guilty. Or if he touch the uncleanness of man, whatsoever uncleanness it be that a man shall be defiled withal, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty."

The touching of a carcass of an unclean animal or creeping thing simply entailed uncleanness till evening, which the washing of the person and his garments thus defiled sufficed to remove (**Leviticus 11:24; Leviticus 11:31**). To touch a dead human body - Tum'at HaMet ("the impurity of the dead") - entailed cleansing with the waters of

separation made from the ashes of the Red Heifer (**Numbers 19**).

Mishneh - The word "hidden" is twice used, to show that he is guilty, for the ignorance of uncleanness, and for the ignorance of the sanctuary (i.e. entering the sanctuary while unclean). - Mishneh. Shebuot, c. 2. sect. 5.

"the uncleanness of man" - The dead body of a man, or the bone of a dead body, or a grave, or any bodily issues.

An Unfulfilled Vow

Leviticus 5:4 - "Or if a soul swear, pronouncing with his lips to do evil, or to do good, whatsoever it be that a man shall pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty in one of these."

The Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it, "whatsoever a man expresses, whether of anything present or future." - i.e. that he fails to do what he swore, and remembers later that he made the oath about it.

Making a vow rashly concerning anything was treated seriously, and an oath usually included a reference to God. Failing to fulfill the oath was a sin/trespass.

'Swear Not'

Matthew 5:34-37 - "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

James 5:12 - "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation (hypocrisy)."

Leviticus 5:5-6 - "And it shall be, when he shall be guilty (*'asham*) in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned (*chata*) in that thing: And he shall bring his trespass offering (*'asham*) unto the LORD for his sin (*chatta'ath*) which he hath sinned (*chata*), a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering (*chatta'ath*); and the priest shall make an atonement (*kaphar*) for him concerning his sin (*chatta'ath*)."

Ambiguity in the Type

"he shall bring his trespass offering... for a sin offering" - The same offering is here called both a trespass offering and a sin offering.

Leviticus 5:7-13 - More ambiguity - Of the two turtledoves, one is a burnt offering and

the other a sin offering. What they atone for is both a "trespass" and a "sin." And the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour is called both a sin offering and a meal offering.

To show the loathsomeness of sin, the flour, when offered, must not be sweetened by the taste by oil, or by the smell by frankincense.

The Trespass Offering Proper

...Against the Lord

Leviticus 5:15 - "If a soul commit a trespass (*ma`al*), and sin (*chata'*) through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass (*'asham* - trespass offering) unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering:"

trespass = *ma`al* - a different word (not *'asham*) - meaning to cover, to act covertly, to be faithless, especially in matters of any sacred covenant, with God or one's spouse in marriage. Also used in **Leviticus 6:2**.

"the holy things of the Lord" - i.e. tithes, the firstfruits, or failure to consecrate or redeem his firstborn.

Leviticus 5:16 - "And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him."

The 20 percent would in this case go to the priest, representing God as the injured or defrauded party.

Defrauding God?

In the Talmud, Rabbi Chanina ben Papa says whenever you enjoy anything in this world without blessing (that is, without giving thanks to God) it is as if you stole from Him.

The Mishnah (Berachoth 9) expands on this: "Man is obligated to bless for evil just as he blesses for good." In fact, the gemara explains that one must confront evils with gladness, and even songs of praise.

...Defrauding a Neighbor

Leviticus 6:2 - "If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the LORD, and lie unto his neighbor in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbor;"

Trespasses against a neighbor are also trespasses against the Lord. They are His

creation.

To deposit valuables with a neighbor when going away on a journey was common practice.

See **2 Timothy 1:12** - "I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day"

"fellowship" = "in putting of the hand" - a handshake agreement similar to the previous.

Leviticus 6:3 - "Or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein."

See **Deuteronomy 22:2, 3** - "Thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost thing of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise."

Violence, cheating, extortion, embezzlement and defrauding in any way are included here.

Leviticus 6:4-5 - "Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, Or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering."

To *not* confess, and then be convicted in court, would result in a *payback* of *fourfold*, so it would be better to confess and pay the 20 percent.

See **Luke 19:8** - "Zacchaeus stood, and said,... Behold, Lord,... if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore fourfold." He went far beyond his legal obligation of the Trespass Offering in respect to compensation. (Compare **2 Samuel 12:6** - "He shall restore the lamb fourfold.")

Leviticus 6:6-7 - "And he shall bring his trespass offering (*'asham*) unto the LORD, a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass offering (*'asham*), unto the priest: And the priest shall make an atonement for him before the LORD: and it shall be forgiven him for any thing of all that he hath done in trespassing (*'ashmah*) therein."

The 'Estimation' - Unique with the Trespass Offering

The unique feature of the Trespass Offering is in the exchange between the two parties

facilitated by the priest.

The priest would place a value not necessarily on the animal sacrifice, but on what he deemed to be the seriousness of the trespass and how much the one who was offended should receive. The value is then exchanged for shekels of the sanctuary and given over to the offended party.

Of course, for this to work, both parties have to agree that the 'shekel of the sanctuary' is 'legal tender' for their exchange, and that the priest is the agreed upon arbiter.

Spiritually, this is an amazing type of how Christ fulfills the Trespass Offering.

When I offend or trespass against someone, if that person is a believer too, we can both access the provision of the type of the Trespass Offering.

Of course, if there is real physical injury or defrauding involved, a real compensation should already have been exchanged.

But what about healing the relationship?

My "currency" may not be recognized or accepted by the one I injured. I may produce tears of repentance, but they may not care about my remorse. Instead they may require a better explanation for what happened that I'm just unable to supply. Or, I may not show "enough" emotion, depending instead on reasoned discussion to renew our relationship. It's highly likely that in every kind of trespass, making amends and restoring the relationship may be difficult or impossible on our own terms.

The anger, guilt and mistrust in these situations can fester for years.

'Laundering' the Currency

However, if both of us look to Jesus in His role as the fulfillment of the Trespass Offering, there can be satisfaction all around. What I have to offer is "laundered" through the "shekel of the sanctuary" and becomes something acceptable to the injured party because it's not coming from me, it's coming from the priest as representative of God.

- I give up trying to say or do the right thing to solve the problem, and leave that to the "priest" - Jesus.
- The one I offended stops looking to me for a resolution, and looks to Jesus instead.

Jesus by His Spirit miraculously supplies the one I offended with satisfaction and grace for the hurt or offense, and adds in an additional 20 percent more. (Recall the "abundance" of the feeding of the 5,000 in which 12 baskets full of bread were left over).

Forgiveness can then flow. And somehow the relationship comes out stronger than ever, because we're both looking to Him. Amazingly, the offended one is better off than before

the offense happened.

Super-abundant Grace

Jesus is dispensing to me HIS forgiveness and also moving and empowering the offended one to forgive as well.

The anger and hurt are obliterated in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, where He endured stripes, piercing and death for my trespasses. And that forgiveness is so abundant that there is 20 percent more of it available for both me and the one I trespassed against.

Even if the one I hurt is not a believer and cannot understand his side of the Trespass Offering, I can be relieved of the guilt through Jesus' death on the cross, and can cease trying to figure out what went wrong, how I could have possibly done this, or what I can do to pacify the offended party, etc.

I must leave it in God's hands. I am no longer my own concern.