

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS – LESSON 5

Sin Sacrifices (Sacrifices Offered by “Sinners”) Continued...

Reparation Offering (AKA Trespass, Guilt or Compensation Offering)

Leviticus 5:14-19

14 The Lord said to Moses: 15 “When a person commits a violation and sins unintentionally in regard to any of the Lord’s holy things, he is to bring to the Lord as a penalty a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value in silver, according to the sanctuary shekel. It is a guilt offering. 16 He must make restitution for what he has failed to do in regard to the holy things, add a fifth of the value to that and give it all to the priest, who will make atonement for him with the ram as a guilt offering, and he will be forgiven.

17 “If a person sins and does what is forbidden in any of the Lord’s commands, even though he does not know it, he is guilty and will be held responsible. 18 He is to bring to the priest as a guilt offering a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. In this way the priest will make atonement for him for the wrong he has committed unintentionally, and he will be forgiven. 19 It is a guilt offering; he has been guilty of wrongdoing against the Lord.”

1. What is Noteworthy About This Sacrifice?

- a. The Reparation Offering is the final sacrificial offering listed in Leviticus 1-5. According to the Hebrew word dictionaries¹ the word that the above NIV reference translates “guilt” says the following:

From Olive Tree Enhanced Strong’s Dictionary

אָשָׁם ’âšâm; guilt; by implication, a fault; also a sin-offering: — guiltiness, (offering for) sin, trespass (offering).

AV (46) - trespass offering 34, trespass 8, offering for sin 1, sin 2, guiltiness 1; guilt, offense, guiltiness offense, trespass, fault guilt, guiltiness compensation (for offense) trespass offering, guilt offering

Many translations prefer “trespass” offering. Almost none use the words “reparation” or “compensation”.

There has been much debate about what this offering actually means and what purpose it served. The confusion over this has been increased because of the way the Purification Offering is thought of by many as THE sin offering.² It is also assumed that the Sin Offering (Purification) and the Guilt

¹ I used Mounce, Strongs, Olive Tree and Vines Greek/Hebrew dictionaries.

² For example, I was taught that the Sin Offering (what I’m calling the Purification Offering, Lev 4:1-5:13) dealt with sins committed against the first five of the Ten Commandments and the Trespass Offering (what I’m calling the Reparation Offering, Lev 5:14-26) dealt with sins committed against commandments six through ten of the Ten Commandments. That is a very alluring and convenient way to look at it. Unfortunately, it’s probably incorrect. The Bible just doesn’t support that, in my view.

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Offering (Reparation) are very closely aligned. However, closer examination reveals a different picture.

2. The Sacrificial Animals

- a. ONLY a ram or a male lamb could be offered as a Reparation Offering³ (Lev 5:14ff; 14:12ff; 19:21-22; Num 6:12). This makes the Reparation Offering different than other offerings: it restricted the choice of the animal to one species (sheep) and one sex (male).
- b. Rams and male lambs could be offered as Burnt Offerings and Peace Offerings, but other animals could also be used. On the other hand, male sheep were NEVER allowed in the Purification (Sin) Offering. Bulls, goats, female lambs and birds could be offered but not rams or male lambs.

On this point, think about what John the Baptist said here...

John 1:29

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

Jesus was male. He was mature. It seems to me that John the Baptist is identifying Jesus as the MALE lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. As I was studying this recently, it suddenly hit me...

If male lambs were NOT ALLOWED in the Purification Offering (aka Sin Offering) was John the Baptist referring to the "sin" offering in John 1:29 or was he referring to some other offering in Leviticus? It is an intriguing question.

Jesus, as we will see, in some way or another was the fulfillment of ALL the offerings in Leviticus. But I think it is significant that John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as the Messiah while the one offering that least corresponds to one who "takes away the sin of the world" is the Purification (Sin) offering. That's another reason that it doesn't make sense to see it as THE sin offering in Leviticus.

BUT the Reparation (Guilt, Trespass) Offering is different. ONLY male sheep were allowed. Could John the Baptist have been referring to the Reparation Offering in John 1:29? Maybe.⁴

³ A ram is a male sheep. It can have horns or not depending on the breed. A lamb is a young sheep and can be male or female. So in this case we are talking about a mature male sheep or a young male sheep.

⁴ There are other possibilities such as the Burnt Offering, the Peace Offering the Passover Lamb, etc. I just think it must be powerfully symbolic that ONLY MALE LAMBS are allowed in this sacrifice.

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3. The Ritual

- a. The “sinner” brought his unblemished male lamb to the altar of burnt offering.
- b. He laid his hand on the animal’s head and confessed his sin (Num 5:7)
- c. The blood is take and splashed against the sides of the altar.
 - i. With the Purification (Sin) Offering the blood was collected in two basins. Most was splashed on the altar. How the blood was handled from there depended on who the sinner was (Priest, Community, Leader, Israelite). That is not the case here. There are no blood sprinkling rites in the Tabernacle. It also doesn’t matter who the sinner is. No doves or pigeons are allowed for the poor.
- d. Since the blood was not taken into the Tabernacle, the Priests were allowed to eat the lamb in a holy place.

4. The Occasions for Needing the Reparation Offering

- a. Lev 5:14-17 Sinning unintentionally against **the Lords holy things** and many believe this refers to the sacred offerings that are to be eaten only by the Priests (In Lev 22, 27 these offerings are called “sacred offerings” (NIV) or “holy things”). It is possible it means inadvertent sin involving any of the Lord’s sacred offerings, vessels, or objects. This could also have included tithes, vows, dedicated property, etc.
 - i. The penalty is in two parts
 1. The man must restore to the Priesthood the value of the property involved plus 20% (thus the term “reparation” or “compensation” offering.)
 2. He must bring a male lamb as a sacrifice.
- b. Lev 5:17-19 Sinning unintentionally against the Lord’s commands (presumably against sacred property) **but DOES NOT KNOW IT**. This is a tough one to grasp. Apparently it works something like this: A person sins but is not aware that they have sinned. However, they **SUSPECT** they have sinned because they begin to feel guilty for some reason. In this case only the male lamb is brought before the Lord. No reparation or compensation is offered because the nature of the sin is not known.
- c. Lev 6:1-7 Sinning **INTENTIONALLY against his neighbor**.
 - i. He must restore the property plus 20%.
 1. The sin could involve
 - a. Deceit
 - b. Stealing
 - c. Cheating
 - d. Extortion
 - e. Swearing falsely
 - f. Or “any such sins that people may do” evidently meaning “do to one another” which involves **property**.
 - ii. He must bring a male lamb to the Priest as reparation to the Lord.

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iii. **What is striking about this particular offering is that it allows sacrificial atonement for deliberate and blatant sin.** The other reparation offerings were for unintentional sins. The purification offering was also for unintentional sins and sins of omission.

1. Most deliberate sin resulted in immediate death. This is the exception to that rule. The exceptions involve **inadvertent** sins against God and **some types** of deliberate sins against your neighbor.
2. These examples of sin against God's holy things are always **inadvertent** sin. Willful, high-handed, sin against God's holy things was penalized by death.
3. If you deliberately sinned against God, you were generally either executed or banished. If you sinned deliberately against your neighbor (in the prescribed ways) you were allowed to live. It was very serious, but not as serious as deliberate sin against God. Why is that?

The High Priest Eli's had wicked sons serving as Priests. They sinned deliberately against God's holy things. When Eli rebuked them he said this...

1 Samuel 2:25

25 "If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?"

Deliberate sin against God is dangerous because the High Priest who mediates between God and man may not be able to do so when one sins directly against God. But when one sins against man, the High Priest can mediate between God and the sinner because the sin was not a direct challenge to God himself. **Not all sin against God resulted in death. There was much grace in the Old Testament. But some did. The lesson; be very careful about rebellious sin against the Lord's commands.**

iv. A second surprise about this offering is the relatively low level of reparation. In some other passages, 200% (double) reparation is required:

Exodus 22:7-9

7 "If a man gives his neighbor silver or goods for safekeeping and they are stolen from the neighbor's house, the thief, if he is caught, must pay back double. 8 But if the thief is not found, the owner of the house must appear before the judges to determine whether he has laid his hands on the other man's property. 9 In all cases of illegal possession of an ox, a donkey, a sheep, a garment, or any other lost property about which somebody says, 'This is mine,' both parties are to bring their cases before the judges. The one whom the judges declare guilty must pay back double to his neighbor.

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The difference between Lev 6 and Ex 22 is that in Exodus the offender is brought to trial and found guilty in court. He wasn't forthcoming about his sin. In Leviticus 6 the sinner came forward and "turned himself in." Making the penalty lower for confession encouraged repentance.

- d. Lev 14 When a leper was declared clean a Reparation Offering was required.⁵
 - e. Lev 19:20-22 A Reparation Offering was required when a man had intercourse with a female slave who was betrothed to another man. The normal penalty for adultery was death (Deut 22:23f). In the case where the female slave was involved, the owner had to offer a reparation lamb to the Priest. The female slave was held to be innocent and was required to do nothing.
 - f. Num 6:6ff If a Nazarite broke his vow by unforeseen circumstances (e.g. someone dying in his presence) he had to bring a Reparation Offering to the Priest and start his vows all over again.
5. The Meaning of the Reparation Offering
- a. The main features of the Reparation Offering are the 20% extra to compensate for the sin against property (either the Lord's or a fellow Israelite) and the requirement of a male lamb as the sacrificial animal which could be seen as "compensation" to the Lord.
 - b. Reparation brought atonement and forgiveness as did most of the offerings.
 - c. Isaiah 53 makes a direct reference to the Reparation offering

Isaiah 53:7-10

7 He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before her shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away.

And who can speak of his descendants?

For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was stricken.

9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the Lord makes his life a guilt⁶ offering,

⁵ Why a leper was required to bring a Reparation Offering is a mystery yet to be solved...

⁶ Same word as found in Lev 5:15 which is translated "guilt offering", "trespass offering" or "reparation offering". Note also the reference to the lamb and sheep.

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he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

This is further evidence, at least in my way of thinking, that John the Baptist was referring to Jesus as a Reparation Offering in John 1:29. Jesus “compensates” for the sin of the whole world.

d. Deliberate sin against one’s neighbor is also sin against God.

Leviticus 6:2

2 “If anyone sins and is unfaithful to the Lord by deceiving his neighbor about something entrusted to him or left in his care or stolen, or if he cheats him...

There is no compartmentalizing sin as “sin is against God” or “sin is against man”. ALL SIN IS AGAINST GOD.

- e. The ritual of the reparation offering had a distinct order;
- i. Restore what you stole or deceived your neighbor about FIRST. Then
 - ii. Come offer your Reparation Offering to the Priest.

God would not accept your sacrifice until you repented to your neighbor first and made him whole.

6. The Reparation Offering in the New Testament

- a. There are no specific references to “guilt” or Reparation Offering in the NT.
- b. But there are many passages in the NT that refer to Is 53 which, as we saw, refers directly to the Reparation Offering.
- c. Example of Reparation in the NT

Luke 19:8

8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

He actually gave more than what was required which pleased Jesus.

Luke 19:9-10

9 Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”

In fact, this is a great example of what the Reparation Offering was all about. Here a man had been cheating his fellow Israelites, probably for many years. He comes to his senses and VOLUNTARILY repents. He offers a generous reparation to all who he may have cheated AND gave ½ of everything he owned to the poor. This is repentance at its best!

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Even though the text does not say so, I'll bet you the next thing Zacchaeus did was to take a male lamb to the Priest.

Summary of the Five Sacrifices

Sacrifices Offered by “Worshippers” - Sweet Savor Sacrifices

1. Burnt
2. Grain
3. Peace

Sacrifices Offered by “Sinners” – The Sin Sacrifices

1. Purification
2. Reparation

It's clear from Leviticus, Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy that once one became aware of unintentional sin or convicted of deliberate sin, he was no longer eligible to offer the Sweet Savor sacrifices. These sacrifices were special in that they could only be offered by those with clear consciences (or as clear as one could be under the OT Law). Once one's conscience was not clear because of sin, he had to deal with the sin through the Sin Offerings first before he could be in close fellowship with God again as symbolized by the Sweet Savor sacrifices.

The sacrificial system presents different models or analogies to describe the effects of sin and the way of remedying them.

Purification Offering – Sin pollutes both the person and the sanctuary. God will not dwell in the midst of such impurity so the Purification Offering deals with the uncleanness and pollution of sin by “disinfecting” them so that God may continue to live among his people.

Reparation Offering – Sin is a debt that man incurs against God and/or his fellow man. The debt must be paid and a penalty (20%) imposed for the offense.

Burnt Offering – Even a sinful man who has a currently clear conscience is unclean before God and deserves to die. An animal must be offered as a ransom payment to atone for his sin. Only through the sacrificial animal is man able to devote himself solely to God and the man must be pure before he can do so.

Grain Offering – God is a King who loves and takes care of his subjects, sinful though they may be. The Grain Offering can be seen as form of humble tribute from a sinful man to a well-deserving, righteous King.

Peace Offering – Showed that the worshipper was at peace with God able to enjoy a sacrificial banquet with his Creator. The Peace Offering in many ways was the culmination of all the sacrifices.

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Jesus' blood sacrifice is symbolic of all the sacrifices.

- **Purification Offering**

Hebrews 1:3

After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

- **Reparation Offering**

Isaiah 53:5

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

10 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the Lord makes his life a guilt⁷ offering,

- **Burnt Offering**

Hebrews 10:8-10

8 First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required them to be made). 9 Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. 10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

- **Peace Offering**

Ephesians 2:13-15

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations...

And even more than that, Jesus' sacrifice had to be **offered only once**.

Hebrews 7:26-28

26 Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. 27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. 28 For the law appoints as high

⁷ Same word as found in Lev 5:15 which is translated "guilt offering", "trespass offering" or "reparation offering". Note also the reference to the lamb and sheep.

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priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

And Jesus' sacrifice **cleanses not only our bodies, but also our consciences.**

Hebrews 9:11-14

11 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. 12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

To God be the Glory!