

Free - Take One



Shaqah

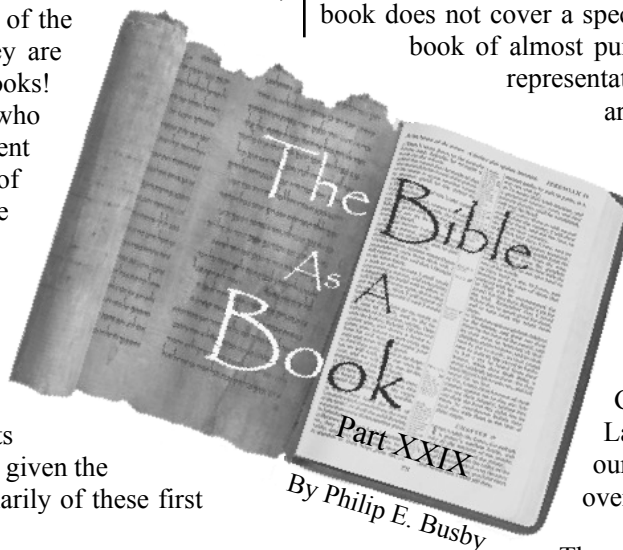
*“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”
Colossians 2:8*

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In our last segment, we began our conversation about the middle book of the Torah, which is Leviticus. As we covered then, Leviticus means, “pertaining to Levites.” However, we also covered the fact this does not mean the book isn't for everyone or that we should see it as unimportant because it only pertains to the Levitical priesthood. In this series, and all my teaching for that matter, I just can't stress enough how much we need to understand that these first five books of the Bible are the core of God's Word, and when those throughout the rest of the Bible refer to “The Scripture,” they are mostly pointing back to these books! This is especially true of those who lived before the New Testament writings, because some, if not most of what the rest of the Hebrew Bible consists of, did not exist yet or was something they were living through at the time. Sure there were, as time passed, prophetic writings, and some of the more historical books existed as the events took place; but those events took place on the basis that God had given the world His Word, which refers primarily of these first five books.



just how important it was/is that God Himself, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, took this position because no man in the lineage of Adam could truly handle the task. The fact we have Jesus standing as our High Priest, and how privileged we are to know this is what is going to truly save those who walk in faith, can only be fully appreciated by studying the book of Leviticus! (Heb. 2:16-18, 4:14-16)

Perhaps it is good to also point out again that this book does not cover a specific time period, because it is the book of almost pure law. This says to us that these representative ordinances are timeless. They are not just a part of Israel's history, or historical events in general. They are the very reason God set up an entire nation dedicated to conduct the representation of the Law, which we all need in order to see the difference between serving a god and serving The One True God. They are also the core of the Law to be enacted! It is with this in our minds that we will begin our overview of the book of Leviticus!

I say this to simply point out that it's foolish to think there are any books of the Bible we can skip over or pay little attention to, but this holds true in no greater way than when talking about the Torah! This book may pertain to the Levite, but that is all the more reason to study it. This book, better than any of the others, helps us close our eyes and meditate on the Word of God, (Josh. 1:8, Ps. 1:1-2, 119:48) reconstructing what it was God was setting up through His representative law. This is especially important in a day when the temple at Jerusalem does not stand and we cannot go there to observe these practices in real life. This book probably teaches us about Holiness, which is being separated out for the purposes of God, more than any other book in the entire Word! No one was separated out for the exclusive purposes of God in the here and now like the Levites, and especially the High Priest's position. It is very important that we see how difficult it is to stand in the direct presence of God as a way of understanding

The opening words of chapter 1 tell us The Lord used the tabernacle as the place to call out unto Moses and began the instructions for what the people should bring as offerings unto The Lord. First, these offerings should come from the cattle or the flocks, which means they were to bring domesticated animals. This is important because these animals have what, for lack of a better term, is monetary value. Whether actual “money” is being used at the time or not, the point is, this is the kind of value man sees most easily. There was no hunting or gathering involved in what a person brought to God. It was to come from a man's valuable possessions!

The first offering talked about was the burnt offerings. A burnt offering from the cattle was to be a male and a specimen without flaw. These offerings were no way to rid one's self of the sick or weak of one's herd, and an offering was not to be forced out of anyone. It was to be something done because they chose for themselves to bring it. The offering was

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to be brought inside the tabernacle's courtyard gate, which is the approach to the altar of sacrifice. There, in representation of this being the life of the one who brought it and the giving of one's very life to God, the person was to put their hand upon the animal's head. (Rev. 12:9-11) Then they were to kill the animal; but the priests would be the ones to collect the blood and bring that blood to be sprinkled on and around the altar of God! The person was also to cut the animal into its appropriate pieces, as the priests prepared the altar with its fire and the wood to burn the sacrifice upon. The priests would then lay the animal's pieces on the altar. However, those parts most representative of still containing parts of or in contact with this world, such as the guts, which contained what the animal had eaten and was in the process of digesting, along with the legs, which are the parts most always touching the ground, were to be washed first. This burnt offering would be fully consumed by the fire of the altar so the smoke could represent an earthly life being transformed so it can rise to meet God! (II Cor. 5:17)

If the animal was a smaller animal, such as a sheep or goat, the animal was to be killed closer to the altar and consistently on the north side of the altar. Between the people bringing cattle and flock offerings, this would create a path of blood from not too far into the tabernacle's court entrance, leading around the north side of the altar toward the entrance of the Holy Place. The procedure for these animals would be much the same after that, with the priests sprinkling the blood, preparing the altar's fire with wood to place the offering on, and placing it there; the appropriate parts again having been washed in water.

As a way of making the bringing of this kind of offering affordable for all of Israel, a person could bring an offering of a fowl. These were to be turtledoves or young pigeons, because these were often kept as domestic animals. However, they were not such a flightless bird like a chicken, goose, or the like. This was important because the procedure would again represent the purging of those things connected with the animal's ability to be physically in touch with the things of this world. These birds would also be more of a premium fowl due to their being specifically bred like a pet, which is not so commonly done for what one might consider more of an everyday farm fowl. Because of the little blood in such an animal, these would be brought directly to the altar, and the priest would kill it there by wringing off its head. This in and of itself would likely serve the same purpose of sprinkling of the blood about the altar, as with other animals the blood would have been collected and sprinkled on the altar.

The head of the bird would then be placed on the altar, and what blood was still inside the animal would be worked out of the body in order to pour out beside the altar. The body would then have its feathers plucked off to represent what we covered about contact with this world. This is because a bird can fly, and while it must also land, being in the air is, for a bird of flight, its main mode of movement. The feathers are what make this possible. Thus, they were to be plucked off and placed in front of the altar, which is the east side facing the gate of the court, in much the same place the ash from the altar were to be placed when removing them. The bird's body was

then to be cut open at the breast bone, halving it without actually breaking it into two parts, nor disconnecting the wings. In this manner, the body would then be placed upon the wood that was placed on the altar's fire to be burned with the head, which had already been placed there.

The next set of offerings connects us all the way back to Cain and Abel, and demonstrates that God was not displeased with Cain's offering in that it was not an animal sacrifice. It's just that offerings involving blood do not get the same treatment as those from plant life. (Gen. 4:1-8) These offerings cannot represent the willingness to give up one's life to the judgment of our sin - which is death - in order to allow God to remake us into what He ultimately wants us to be. (Rom. 6:23) However, they do represent the giving of one's earthly existence through sharing with God a portion of one's labor, specifically as it relates to the judgment that we would eat bread by the sweat of our face. (Gen. 3:17-19) This is very much connected to the issue of tithing from one's increase. We even see this in that while these offerings would mostly be given to be used by the priests, which represents the person giving the offering to God and His work, even the priest is to put a portion of these offerings on the altar's fire, which represents the priest's giving of his increase to God!

The first of these plant-based offerings is that of fine flour, which was to have oil put on it. The flour is made from the very valuable part of the plant's body. Oil is the valuable liquid of certain plants' fruit, and an equivalent to blood. Thus, the representation of life and death are both there even in these plant-based offerings. However, a point to keep in mind is the plants and the production of the product it would become (flour and oil) is done before bringing it to the tabernacle. In other words, live plants are not brought and prepared there as with animal sacrifices. This is also why we see the introduction of frankincense. Frankincense is used as a traditional aromatic perfume used to cover the bad smell of a body; and thus, often used when burying a body. Frankincense would be placed on top of the flour and oil offering so the priest, when reaching in for a handful of the flour and oil to burn on the altar, would automatically take with it all the frankincense on the top. These kinds of offerings are referred to as, "...a thing most holy of the offerings..." Leviticus 2:3. This is because they are not entirely burned on the altar, but the remainder is given to the priests. This means it was an item set apart for the work of God, which is what holiness means.

This giving of an offering for God's use is also why, beginning with the next plant-based offering, we see the description of the offering using the word "oblation." The next meat offerings are also of an even more finished product. They are not just flour and oil, but the food produced using flour as a main ingredient and oil mingled in. If an oven is used to produce the offering, the offering should be cakes or wafers made of fine flour and the oil, but without leaven, because leaven represents sin. This is because leaven comes about, especially in earlier days, by setting aside a small portion of the last dough you made in order to let it spoil a little. You then would mix that bit into a new batch of dough, and this spoiling, or leaven, would spread through the new batch. This process is

What About God's Chosen People?

Part III

From Living Springs' Questions and Answers

"Is it true that the Jews are God's chosen people? I have a Christian friend who says the Jews were not God's chosen people."

In our last segment, our focus shifted from the discussion of the fact God did establish a chosen people, more to why He did. We discussed how the weakness of language should not confuse us about the fact God has, does, and will choose people from all the world to be His people; and thus, for salvation. However, there is still a chosen people who are probably better described as God's chosen nation. We also began to look at why this chosen nation must still be important and still a chosen people as a nation, on the basis of facts that show us the reasons something like the church could not replace them. In this segment, we want to pick up on that discussion and look at a few more points that strengthen this truth.

Simply put, the church could not replace the chosen nation because it was and is not the churches' calling, and this is shown to us not only in the fact the Law was not an embedded part of any other culture's life and heritage as it was/is Israel's. It is also good to look at basic facts such as, Israel was organized in a way which meant not just any Israelite could carry out much of the ceremony the Law required. A big part of the key to carrying out the full laws of ceremonial practice was restricted specifically to one tribe (the Levites), and even more so to one family out of that tribe (Aaron's house). These specific individuals would serve as the priests and the High Priest needed for the temple to function. This shows us, God did not even entrust His ceremonial law to an entire nation of people, but very much to a specific family, who in turn shows us just how difficult this was to maintain.

Right from the start, the family of Aaron showed that if they did not perform the ceremonies correctly, and more importantly with a pure heart, they would pay with their lives. (Lev. 10:1-7) You see, it is no small thing to stand before the presence of God so directly as the priests needed to do, especially the High Priest! Men had to be prepared to do so with a heart clean of the things of this world, and knowledge of the Law and its ordinances that far exceeded the knowledge a general population of even a specifically chosen nation would maintain. If we took the time to cover even more specific history, which the Bible tells us about Israel, we would see the fact God's direct presence at the tabernacle and temple was rarely seen through the course of the tabernacle/temple(s)' existence with the directness and potency we see at the beginning of the Law's establishment. This is because it was so hard for men to maintain the

righteousness and holiness needed for God to be there so directly without God's Holiness consuming them. Thus, God's presence couldn't continually be there in the way He desired and started out with; or the system would not even have existed as much as it did, at least in the way it was able to, nor would it have lasted as long as it did!

There is also the very pointed fact to look at here, which is: what we see in the story of God's chosen nation is that even with God making His ordinances part of their cultural heritage, Israel as a whole had a very difficult time not straying off course over and over. They had been warned by God that they were not to take on the cultural and religious beliefs of the nations that surrounded them. However, they fell to this temptation; and at times failing so badly they even forgot there was a specific Law they, as a nation, were to be following. (II Kin. 22) Eventually, forsaking God's Laws caused the nation to suffer the severe blow of captivity in foreign lands. Only a remnant of Israel was to be left on the land God gave them. (II Chron. 30, Isa. 1:5-9) All these facts about how Israel had such a hard time, even after all God had given them in order to do His work on this earth, again shows us it would be impossible for a random group of people from all cultures around the world to be given the responsibility of performing the ceremonial law!

Moving along with these thoughts in mind, we should understand that if following these laws were, what was necessary for salvation, even before the time of Christ, there would have been many souls lost, not just because they themselves failed to follow this law and all its specifics, but because many would have been unfortunate enough to live at a time when Israel itself was not functioning at a level that gave them the opportunity to see what they needed in their lives, or do in order to find salvation! In the end, it all comes back to the simple fact it was never God's intent to trap mankind, even His chosen nation, into this kind of failure; but it was God's intent to show all of us, through His chosen nation, just how much we all need a Saviour that only God Himself could/can provide!

Because this is true, God would not go from using Israel to show us this, to sending Christ in order to bind any other part of, or group in, the world into such a format. Thus, the demonstrative laws, no matter the current circumstances, are still the responsibility of God's chosen nation, not some organization such as the church or any other group of people. Now, this is the argument many would use to say Christ changed everything when He came to this earth, but that is foolish, especially in light of Jesus' own words when He said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets:

I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Matthew 5:17-18 Believing Jesus changed everything and did away with the Law, even for Israel, or transferred what God then wanted done, to a random group across the world called the church, is just not the right way to see it! The world still needs a focal point in order to know that what we are looking for from God, to take place on this earth, is of God, when and as it takes place. Thus, just as the wise men came to worship The King of the Jews at the time of Christ's birth, because they knew it meant something special for Jesus, a Jew, to be born, so too, we need to look not to some organization, church, ministry, minister, etc. to know something special is coming about, but to the people God designated centuries ago to be the holders of His oracles!

This point is often misunderstood because people get caught up on things such as the idea that not long after Jesus' first appearing, the temple was destroyed and much of the demonstrative law halted due to this and other factors. People will say this happened or was allowed to happen because the laws of sacrifice, and the like, were replaced by Jesus when He died on the cross and rose from the dead. Again, this is a foolish way to look at it. First, we need to look at the fact the time after Christ, when the temple was destroyed, was not the first time the Law was unable to be carried out in full. Not just because Israel at times failed to carry it out - as we discussed before - but also because this was not the first time the temple had literally been destroyed. (II Chron. 36:16-20) The point is simply, Israel showed us and still shows us today that in a world falling ever deeper into sin, it becomes more and more difficult to maintain the things of God, especially on the scale the Law God gave to Israel requires.

This is why it took so long to see the mobile tabernacle Israel started with in the wilderness, replaced by a more permanent structure in the place God chose to set His name on this earth, which was and is Jerusalem. (Deut. 12:5-7, I Kin. 8:26-30) It is also why, after the destruction of the first temple, God worked to use those of His chosen nation who would follow Him, to eventually return to the land of promise and rebuild the temple. This was by no means an easy task, as the remnant who were suppose to stay on the land, even during the time of the captivity, had, for the most part, chosen to abandon it. (Jer. 41:1-43:7) This left room for other people, not of God's nation, to take possession of much of the land and believe it was theirs, and a place Israel did not belong. Then there was the problem, due in no small part to that fact, the first group God sent back from the captivity did not act on the work with their whole hearts and complete the task of building the new temple, much less reestablish the Law. It was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain enough people dedicated to the oracles of God to maintain the ceremonial law. God would then have to send a fresh group of His people back from the captivity to jump-start the process and get it back to a reasonable working state! (Ezra & Neh.)

Beyond these facts, is the fact that even after

reestablishment of much of the Law, the political circumstances would continue to morph and change, as they always do among men. This affected the performance of the Law over and over, and through the centuries not only was this second temple essentially replaced by what I believe should be called the third temple, but this third iteration of the temple was not even built under the direction of God's chosen nation as much as it was built as a political statement by the political leaders of the day, for their own political purposes! This is the temple that would be standing at the time of The Messiah's coming, and is the one people like to point to as being destroyed not long thereafter.

To top all this off, there is the fact we have discussed in this series already, which is, by the time The Messiah is sent to the nation of Israel, the ruling religious views had become so distorted that they put the very Messiah, which all true believers had been waiting for, to death. What does this show us? Simply that as God gave man, including His specifically chosen nation, every opportunity to show they could listen to God's voice and get things right on this earth without God using forceful means to administer righteousness, it just became harder and harder, in a world of sinful men, to maintain anything of the things of God. This was true even for one people, on one spot on this planet. The growing problem was, in order for all the world to have the opportunity to see Jesus was The True Messiah we should all have been and still should be looking for, people needed to see Him come under the right circumstances; through the right people; to the right place; in order to fulfill the prophecies that had been laid out centuries in advance for the purpose of us being able to recognize Who and why The Messiah was and is important to the entire world!

Because God gave man a free will, God's righteousness demanded He give us the chance to get it right. However, the above facts show us God could not wait until it became impossible for The Messiah to show Himself to and through Israel, on their land of promise, in the prophesied city of Jerusalem, and with the temple still in place. Thus, the right way to view the circumstances of the temple being destroyed not long after Christ's first appearing is not the traditional view of the Christian religion, which again is that Jesus' sacrifice ended the need for the temple and the ordinances of the Law God gave to Israel, but just the opposite was/is true. To put it as simply as I can, one should understand - Jesus did not come to put an end to the temple sacrifices; Jesus came because the temple sacrifices were going to come to an end!

All this is why talking about the difference between truly being of the chosen nation and being a Christian is really not comparing things that belong in the same category. A member of God's chosen nation is obligated to follow the Law because it was/is their God-given responsibility. This remains true even if, or maybe I should say especially if, a Jew finds and accepts Jesus as The Messiah. Where as being a Christian, whether you're a Jew or non-Jew, is to accept everything in your life as centered around not just the idea the

promised Messiah would come, but the understanding that the man Jesus Christ was/is The Messiah those who truly had/have faith knew God would provide, because He is The One God prophesied in His Written Word would come through the chosen nation, which God used His Word to establish!

Knowing God has, in fact, provided Himself as a lamb slain for our sins is truly good news, because Israel has shown us there is no hope in a written law saving us. This is largely because it shows how far we as humans fall short of God's glory in spite of our best efforts to follow something such as a written law. No human of the line of Adam, nor group of humans, can even be depended on to maintain what we need for the ceremonies to be what saves us even if they could, and God does not want to see any perish because the Law was/is too weak to save us. God used and is still using Israel to demonstrate this point so we could/can all learn from it.

That's the beauty of what true Christianity should be teaching us! Again, there might not be a representative temple with all its representative ceremonies, and there has not been for a very long time now. However, there is still the real thing those things were, and will be, only meant to represent in the first place. This is why Jesus talked about how He wanted to live inside of us. It does not matter if you are of the chosen nation or not, the real temple is individual humans who desire, allow, and prepare their lives for God to live inside of them. Jesus talked about leaving so The Holy Ghost could come. This was not just so we would be comforted, but so this very thing could happen. (John 16:6-8) Jesus' job was to come in human flesh; but as John the Baptist said of Jesus, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:" Matthew 3:11 The Holy Ghost needed to come so we could have Him as the light shining in our lives, as the lights of the temple menorah represent in the Holy place, (Ex. 27:20-21, John 14:15-17) and teaching us as individuals those things the Law shows us we need, but which written ordinances could never accomplish! There may not, for the time being, be a temple with its representative sacrifices to show us our need for these things; but in spite of man's weaknesses, the real thing is something still available, and God's Word still shows us the representative law through its words if one is only willing to study it. (Ps. 119:11) Paul talks about the real things in Romans 12:1 when he beseeches us to present our bodies a living sacrifice. Our bodies are how we function in this physical world, but the desires of the flesh are not the things of God. (Rom. 8:1-8) Paul tells us our bodies should not be used to provide the things it desires, but that it's our reasonable service to God that we suppress the flesh's desires and use it as an instrument of righteousness!

Jesus also talked about knowing those who truly serve God, by the fruits in their life, but these fruits are not fruits of the flesh. These fruits are fruits produced by allowing The Holy Ghost to mold our spirit into God's likeness. Then

our spirit will produce fruits such as Paul describes, which are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Gal. 5:22-23) As our spirit produces these fruits, it must then be able to translate them out through the actions of our flesh for a witness to this world, just as the Law was meant to do. This is why we must present our bodies a living sacrifice. It's not enough to just seek to develop these fruits inside of us, but while alive we sacrifice our flesh to the work of God and His righteousness! This is the truth the Law could only represent. Righteousness is not about following a written law, because it can't accomplish enough. True righteousness is not about us being able to redeem ourselves when we fail, because only faith in God can do that. True righteousness is about doing the work of God in and through our lives! This is why we are told faith without works is dead. (James 2:20) True righteousness is about us striving to make the right choices in how we handle ourselves in every situation and in every moment of our lives. This can only be truly accomplished in the Jew or non-Jew alike by the real things being inside us, not just the representative things; and the real thing is God living in our hearts in the way God represents in the Law by creating the temple as His physical dwelling place on this earth.

Also, we should understand, just as the Law set up a specific priesthood to carry out full-time ministry at the temple for the nation of Israel, among all people, God set up those, even who are not of the chosen nation, who are specifically called into full-time ministry. (Eph. 4:8-15) However, ministry, just like the ordinances of the Law, is also not, even for those in full-time ministry, the truth of their individual faith! No one should seek to be in ministry full time above their individual faith. We should all seek the righteousness of God and His true kingdom first and foremost, no matter who we are or what our physical labor here is. (Matt. 6:3) Allowing God to live in us and flow through us on an everyday basis is something those even in ministry must seek first or they will fail; and just as with the Law, being in the ministry is not what is going to save anyone. Learning what the true ministry is attempting to lead us to and living in that faith as everyday people doing everyday things, growing in our righteous abilities to do so has, is, and will continue to be the real point of any law, ministry, etc.!

All this makes it ridiculous to believe, and is a main point in why it does not mean, the Law has passed away. Just as God calls individuals into ministry work, Israel as a chosen nation still has a job to do! This is confirmed to us in the fact Jesus told us when He left this earth He would return, (Matt. 24:30, Acts 1:9-11) and just as with His first coming, where do we look to for His return? How do we know we are really seeing the things of God and not just the things of men? By looking to the same place God established centuries ago for all those with true faith to look to - His chosen nation! (Zech. 14:1-4)

Without making this an entire point of our discussion here, let me just point out this is a main reason so much of what calls itself the church falsely teaches there will be the

physical appearance of a false christ to establish a world empire! These kinds of teaching show us why it is such a fallacy to say God never had a chosen nation, or to think something like the church could replace it. However, it also brings us to the discussion of our third question, which is, are the people we know today as the Jews really the same people as those God chose to establish through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as His chosen nation? I will start this by simply saying yes! The facts both Biblical and historical show us clearly this is true, and while it would take a volume of books to cover them all, I will attempt to lay out the basics of why we know this is true.

To begin with is the simple fact Israel, and by Israel I refer here to those we generally call Jews, are and have been for a few decades now, according to prophecy, once again returning to their land in great numbers. (Amos 9:8-15) Now, it is not to say God is responsible for the violence of evil men; but He is responsible for opening the gateway that has created the circumstances we now see, which uses the persecution of God's chosen nation to drive them back to their land. For many centuries, Jews have been persecuted in foreign lands; but now when this kind of persecution takes place, the land of Israel is the destination sought by Jews. One of the greatest and beginning examples of this is that of the Holocaust carried out by the Nazis, which was not just about a dislike for Jews but an attempt to exterminate their entire race!

During this time, many Jews were caught off-guard and with no place to go. During most of the Holocaust there was resistance and downright refusal by many of the nations of the world to even allow Jews to immigrate to their countries in order to escape what was certain death for many Jewish people and whole communities. This was true of most all the countries who were fighting the Nazis as their mortal enemies, and places such as the United States were no exception. Even as there became an international consensus among the "peace loving" nations to establish a national homeland for the Jewish people in their ancient land, there are historical facts about literally boat loads of Jews fleeing the Holocaust, destined to the land of Israel, being turned back by the very nation (Britain) mandated to bring this homeland for the Jews into reality.

What a study of history teaches us is the Jewish people had to rise up and make it a reality for themselves. This was done again as it had been millenniums before when God brought Israel out of Egypt. The Jews had to fight, not just against the people who then claimed the land as their own and refused (to this day) to even share it with the Jewish people, but again they had to fight the very people of the nations who had agreed to establish this homeland. It was in May of 1945, that Nazi Germany collapsed, the SS guards fled, and the death camps which were carrying out the Holocaust ceased to exist. However, even by August, United States special envoy Earl Harrison made public a report to U.S. President Truman on the treatment of Jewish displaced

persons in Germany. The point here is, even following World War II, several hundred thousand Jewish survivors were unable or unwilling to return to what, up until then, they had considered their home countries!

Harrison's report also contained a strong indictment of Allied military policies, underscoring the plight of the Jews, yet the world for the most part stood back and did nothing! Thus, the Jews determined to fight for their right to the land God had promised them, eventually made Britain's control over the land of Israel increasingly difficult, which was necessary even in the years following World War II. The Jews were forced to cause severe damage to British morale by attacking British installations and forces that were preventing Jews from coming to Israel. By the hand of God, even the world's public opinion eventually turned against Britain as a result of the British policy of preventing Holocaust survivors from reaching Israel, and there became increasing opposition to Britain's continued presence in Israel among Britain's own public opinion!

Finally, on November 29, of 1947, The General Assembly of the United Nations decided with a majority of 33 in favor, 13 against, 10 abstaining, and 1 absent to divide what they called "Palestine" into two states. One would be for the Jewish people, and one for the Arab population. Jews would celebrate in the streets, but the Arabs rejected the plan with violence against the Jews. The next day, the Arab High Committee, which represented the surrounding Arab states, declared war on Israel. However, again by the hand of God, a group of determined Jews, willing to give their lives for their land, defended the land of Israel and its people, both Jewish and Arab, from the neighboring states which attacked! The Jewish state won the War for Independence, and on May 14, of 1948, David Ben-Gurion, who was the leader of the Jews in Israel, announced the establishment of the State of Israel in Tel Aviv and declared that Jewish immigration into the new state would be unrestricted! Between 1948 and 1951, almost 700,000 Jews immigrated to Israel, including more than two-thirds of the Jewish displaced persons from Europe.

It has often been my thought that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said it best when he said in June of 2009, "The right of the Jewish people to a state in the Land of Israel does not derive from the catastrophes that have plagued our people. There are those who say that if the Holocaust had not occurred, the State of Israel would never have been established. But I say that if the State of Israel had been established earlier, the Holocaust would not have occurred."

Until next time, may we each continually choose to be the people God wants us to be!

***Questions submitted to the Institute, answered by
Philip E. Busby.***

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representative of how quickly and thoroughly sin brings corruption into something where it did not exist. (I Cor. 5:6-8) As with the flour and oil, these cooked offerings were not fully consumed by the fire to represent the purging of sin, but used by the priests. Thus, they cannot contain the representation of sin to be considered holy.

If the oblation is baked using a pan, the oil is more apt to escape the mixture and make a dryer end product. Thus, these kinds are to be broken into pieces after baking and have more oil put on them, so it may be truly mingled with the bread. However, if the oblation is fried in a pan, not only is the initial mixture to use oil, but the cooking process of frying uses oil in the pan as well. Because of this, these do not need the extra oil, post cooking. All these kinds of offerings are to be given to the priests, who will take them to the altar and break off or use a piece to place on the altar to be burnt as a direct offering to God. However, again the remainder is to be used by the priests. Of course, none of these plant-based offerings are to contain leaven, and because it is an animal-based product, no honey was to be used in any of these plant-based offerings, as a portion of it was to be burned on the altar. Honey is not to be burned because it represent the pleasures of this world instead of the purity of separation from this world for the purposes of God.

Another oblation are those things brought as offerings of firstfruits. These are a little different than the other plant-based offerings in that many would be raw produce still containing life in them. Thus, these are not to be burned on the altar at all, because this would not provide the right symbolism. Talking about proper symbolism, God points out that it's also important the meat offerings all be offered with salt. This is because salt is not only a seasoning but a natural preservative, which symbolizes that all these offerings are preserving the covenant between man and God. Then there is an exception to firstfruit offerings in that there is one which can be placed on the altar, and that is corn. However, it must not be raw. The entire ear of corn must first be dried out with fire, which is the first step in preparing this grain to be milled as flour, and the individual kernels were to be beaten off the cob. Then it can be offered in like manner as raw flour, with oil poured on it and frankincense placed on top. The priest would again take a handful, which would include all the frankincense, to burn on the altar.

The next category of offerings is the peace offerings. These are offerings of thanksgiving unto God, and a way for the one who brings it to use the animal in a feast of celebration for the goodness God has shown them. These would be partly burned on the altar unto God, a portion was for the priests, but the bulk of the edible parts were returned to the one who brings it. These could come from the herd, but could be male or female because either are good for food purposes. Because these were still offerings unto God, the animal was still to be a prime specimen, and they were killed in the same manner as the burnt offering animals. For cattle this was inside the tabernacle's courtyard gate, which is before the altar; and as before, one would place their hand on the head of the animal. The priests would also sprinkle the blood of these offerings

around the altar. The big difference would come by way of the fact a peace offering would not be fully burned on the altar. Only the deposits of more pure fat, which did not include all the fat intermingled with the meat and such of the animal, would be separated out and burned on the altar. The rest of the animal would be butchered in a normal fashion, getting rid of those parts (mostly the head, organs, and guts) which are not eaten. Only a portion would be for use by the priests in God's service, but this is why again we see the word "oblation," and the bulk was taken by the one who brought the offering to worship God.

A peace offering could also be a prime specimen from the sheep or goats, with the same choice of bringing male or female. However, in this case, sheep would be handled a little different from goats. For both these smaller animals they were again to be killed in like manner as the burnt offerings. One would place their hand on the animals head and kill it in the appointed place beside the altar. The blood would be sprinkled about the altar, and the fat portions burned on the altar. The big difference with sheep as opposed to goats is that with sheep the tail was to be broken off directly where the backbone ends. This tail was also to be burned. This is because with the kind of sheep commonly kept by those in the middle east, this tail consists of fat surrounding a bit of cartilage. This portion of the sheep was not a part of the animal people generally disposed of as it would be with goats, but was considered a delicacy by many. However, the composition of this kind of tail makes it part of the fat deposits of the animal, and as such, it is to be given to God. It was to be a perpetual statute among Israel, no matter where they lived or roamed, they not eat any of these fat portions of an animal, nor the blood. The fat was not to be eaten because it belongs to God, as is clearly demonstrated in these offerings. Blood was not to be eaten because it is considered the life flowing through a human or animal. (Gen. 9:3-5) Now after burning the fat upon the altar, as with the cattle, a sheep or goat would then be butchered in a normal fashion, disposing of the parts not commonly eaten. A portion of the offering would be given to the priests, and the bulk again taken by the one bringing the offering to hold a feast of thanksgiving unto God!

The next category of offerings were the sin offerings, of which there are different stipulations for different offenses and by whom the offense is done. These are more of what we often refer to as sacrifices, as they are not voluntary, but mandatory if one is to remain a part of God's chosen nation of Israel. To start off this list of sin offerings, we come to those that are brought because the sin committed was done out of ignorance. This would be those things we might describe as not premeditated, or in other words, the person did not enter into the action or activity with the knowledge, or at least the thought pattern, that what they were about to do would be a sin. However, after the sin was committed when it came to the realization of the offender that they had committed sin in doing or taking the action(s) they had taken, these are the offerings to be brought as atonement.

The first group of offenders dealt with is very appropriately that of the priests. Priests, of course, held the

highest positions of ministry to God among Israel. When a priest has sin in his personal life, his ministry is affected. This in turn affects all those he is to minister to. This makes a priest's sin very much like the next group, which is when the congregation as a whole is considered to have committed sin. All this is why we are told in I Peter 4:17 judgment starts at the house of God! Now, one of the first things pointed out in talking about the sin of a priest is it must be an offense common to those of the general population of Israel. This is due to the fact there are sins a priest can not afford to commit. These mostly fall in the category of things only a priest has the ability to commit due to the services he performs at or in connection to the work of God. These kinds of sin were to bring the almost immediate penalty of death upon a priest. This was especially true at times such as the period this book was written in, when God's direct presence truly resided on the tabernacle. It was not the choice of Israel to carry out the sentence, God's Holiness simply came forth and struck the priest dead. (Lev. 10:1-3)

Going through these specific offerings really begins to make it clear why God told Moses of the offerings He started out with. These offerings mostly had the same general stipulations and procedures as those already covered, with only certain details being specifically different or unique to each one of these. For the sin of a priest he was to bring an offering of a young bullock, of course, being a prime specimen. He was to bring it to the same place before the altar as a burnt offering of the cattle was to be brought. Then he would lay his hand upon the bullock's head in representation that the wages of his sin are death, and the animal was dying in representation of himself. The priest who had brought the offering would then kill the bullock. This is where we get directly to the idea that we all need a Saviour - which only God could provide - to die for our sins, so when we die due to our sin, we can be redeemed from death by sharing in the Saviour's resurrection!

As the animal was killed, those priests serving, other than the one bringing the sacrifice, would collect of the blood. This is where the real difference comes in. Instead of taking the blood and simply sprinkling it round about the altar of burnt offerings, it was to be taken into the tabernacle itself, in front of the veil. This was called the Holy Place, where the menorah, table of shewbread, and the altar of incense was. The priest would then dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle the blood toward the veil seven times, in recognition that one who had the job of entering this place had sinned and was once again seeking God's forgiveness and completion in and for his life. The blood would also be placed on the horns at the corners of the altar of incense, which the priests approach in order to burn incense before God continually. The blood would then be taken back out to the altar of burnt offering and poured out at the base of that altar.

After this, the bullock would be treated in the same manner as one brought for a peace offering. The main deposits of fat would be removed from the bullock and burned on the altar. However, there is a big difference from peace offerings

when it comes to what would be done with the remainder of the bullock. Instead of getting to use the flesh of the animal to feast upon, all that remained of the bullock was to be taken outside the camp of Israel into what was considered a clean place. This would be the place where all the ashes of the tabernacle's fires would be carried out to be disposed of. This was not a place the people were to go or pass through. It represented the fact all things of this universe are temporary, and not only do things of this world pass away, turning into dust on a constant basis, this entire heaven and earth will one day pass away according to God's plan. (Isa. 65:17, II Pet. 3:11-14, Rev. 21:1-4) Pouring the ash in a particular place, generally off limits, would allow it to be naturally reabsorbed into the earth's system, just the way God created the world to do such things for itself. The ash was not to be used or disturbed by man for any purpose.

It was in this same place where what was left of the bullock was to be carried to, and in that place it would be burned completely. The ashes of this process could, of course, then simply be left where they lay. This part of the sin offerings was a representation that when we die our body is lost. It can be disposed of in various ways, but the end result is that the flesh does not, nor will it leave this earth. Our bodies were made from the dust of the ground and unto it our bodies will return. (Gen. 2:7, 3:19) However, there are parts of us (our spirit and mind), which can most easily be describe as our soul, that will return to God. The fat of the sin offering was burned on the altar so the smoke of the burning could rise up to represent this fact.

The simple point and representation of a sin offering is that what God took from this creation in making man will die and remain here, passing away with everything else here. That which God breathed into the fleshly form He made from this ground, in order to make man a living soul, will return to God to be judged according to what we did with our lives here. (Rev. 20:11-15) Whether we care about doing what we need to do to have and maintain a relationship with God in our lives (faith) is what we will be judged on. (Eph. 2:8-10) Our faith will determine whether our soul will share in the resurrection power of Jesus Christ and be born again into a new eternal body, or be thrown into that place made to dispose of the devil and those angels who were already with God but chose to reject Him! (Matt. 25:31-46, John 6:53-58, Rom. 6:3-10, Rev. 20:10)

Let's stay in God's Word!

A Special Note To Our Readers.

I want to apologize again for how late these issues are going out, but most of all I want to thank all of you who have lifted me to The Lord in prayer! I still can only report that I will simply continue to write as God wills and gives me the grace to do so. However, I know your prayers to God for my health have brought me through these many months of pain and ill health. We never know just what the future holds, but we know who holds the future! May God bless you all, and may each of us continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour - Jesus Christ!

Shalom,
Philip E. Busby