***Our Giving is a Sacrifice - PH89-01
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 4:14-19***

We continue in Philippians 4:14-19 on financing the Lord's work. When the apostle Paul writes to the Christians in Philippi, we found that he is prosperous financially because of the particular gifts which they had sent him. Prosperity, we pointed out, is both dangerous as well as a blessing for the believer. It depends upon where the individual Christian goes with prosperity. When we come into prosperity, we are faced with having the capacity spiritually to be able to handle the money without going off the deep end. It is only the super grace type of Christian who can really ultimately handle prosperity.

So a Christian has to maintain his divine viewpoint through the feeding of his soul upon Bible doctrine if his prosperity is not to turn into a curse. That would be a tragedy. When prosperity comes into our life on a material level, it should be a blessing, and it should enable us to be even more effective servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. We should look forward with anticipation for having the means to make possible for us to do the things in the Lord's work that need to be done.

The apostle Paul declared to us in verse 18 his own financial condition, consequent to the receiving of this gift, in the words, "But I have all. I have more than enough. (I abound.) I am full, overflowing, and have received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you." He now gives God's view of what these Philippians had done in the form of giving this particular offering.

The latter part of verse 18 says, "An odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." With these words, the apostle Paul introduces another one of those major doctrines which we find in the Bible. The book of Philippians regularly touches upon doctrines in kind of a passing way, but which in themselves are doctrines of considerable depth. This one touches upon the whole business of the Christian's priesthood under the Melchizedek order, and of the sacrifices which are to be offered by Melchizedek priests. We're going to be looking into that in some detail.

We begin now with the statement, "An odor of a sweet smell." The word "odor" is the Greek word "osme." It simply means "a smell" or "an odor." It is the general word that the Greek uses for odor, because it doesn't make any reference to whether it is a good odor or a bad odor. It is connected with "having received." What Paul has received of Epaphroditus is, first of all, something that is in the form of a fragrance. He describes it as an odor of a sweet smell. That's the word "euodia," from which we got the lady's name, "Euodias." "Euodia" means "aroma" or "fragrance," and here it's describing the quality of the odor. It's an odor of a certain quality – an odor of fragrance, or we would say "a fragrant odor."

**Levitical Offerings**

These two words, "osme" and "euodia" together are used again and again in what is called the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek language. In this Greek translation of the Septuagint, these two words occur many times in connection with describing the quality of the Levitical offerings. There were five basic offerings which the Mosaic Law prescribed for a Jew to bring. Three of those offerings are described as offerings which are an odor of fragrance before God – a sweet smell in the nostrils of God. Two of those offerings are not a sweet smell in the nostrils of God, and they are not described as a fragrant odor. But in the Septuagint, these three basic offerings (and we will look at those in a moment in more detail) are described regularly by these words.

**The Christian Sacrifice of Giving**

The Christian, when he gives his money to the Lord's work, is actually making a sacrifice. That is the point here. This is one of the sacrifices in the age of grace which a Christian priest, after the order of the priesthood of Melchizedek (following Jesus Christ, who is our High Priest), can make. We can make the sacrifice of substance. It is a spiritual sacrifice, yet it is a real sacrifice, and it is compared to these Levitical sacrifices. This giving of our money under grace principles is described as being a sacrifice with a spiritual perfume. When you do not give, by the same token we may say, on a grace basis, your giving is not a case of the spiritual perfume, but is a case of spiritual body odor.

The offering that a Christian makes can be a fragrance in the nostrils of God, or your giving of your money can just downright stink to God – one or the other. This idea of a fragrance relative to our offering is a very significant concept in Scripture. It is a very important idea relative to those Levitical offerings.

The gift of money sent by the Philippians, Paul says, was done on the right basis. It was done under grace principles, and it was like a fragrance of a sweet incense. It was a token of their love; of their loyalty; of their spiritual maturity; and, most of all, of their affection for the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. So this concept speaks here of the fragrance of a sacrifice which is pleasing to God. These two words mean that this sacrifice is pleasing. It's acceptable.

We have this used elsewhere in the Scriptures. It might be interesting just to look at a couple of those. For example, in Ephesians 5:2, we have the same concept where the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world is described as being pleasant to the nostrils of God.

We have this several times in 2 Corinthians 2:14-16. Here you have the word "savor." This is the word "osme" or "odor." This refers to divine viewpoint knowledge: "Thanks be unto God who always causes us to triumph in Christ and makes manifest the odor of his knowledge by us in every place." Here is an odor in the sense of a savor, an acceptable fragrance in the form of the knowledge of God. That is the knowledge of His Word. In verse 15, we have this other word, "euodia." It is "a sweet savor" or "a fragrance." Here it is applied to salvation through Jesus Christ: "For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ." We who are born again are fragrance in the nostrils of God. "In them that are saved and in them that perish.

Then in verse 16, we have the word "osme" again used twice – of spiritual death or, of spiritual life: "To the one we are the savor, the odor of death, and to the other we are the savor (or the odor) unto life." That is, to some people, the gospel, as it has grown in the minds of believers who have gone positive to the gospel message (we who born again), to those who are born again, are an odor of eternal life. Somebody sees you as a Christian and says, "Hey, you're going to the same place I am – eternity, or heaven. That's our home. That's where we're going." An unbeliever sees us who are born again, and if he understood what was taking place, and if he knew where we were going, he would recognize that we, in his nostrils are an odor of death. Anytime a Christian crosses his path, that Christian is in effect the spiritual scent of death, because that Christian is going to a different place than that unbeliever is going.

So for some people, you cast an odor of life eternal. For others, for unbelievers, you cast an odor of eternal death rather than life.

Certain sacrifices, therefore, were described as a fragrant odor in the nostrils of God. You can read about these in Genesis 8:21, Exodus 29:18, and Leviticus 1:9-13. All of those speak about sacrifices which are a pleasing odor to God, meaning they're acceptable.

So Philippians 4:18 speaks about an odor of a sweet smell, and then it describes a little more of what he is applying this to in the word "sacrifice." The word "sacrifice" is the Greek word "thusia." "Thusia" is something offered in worship to deity. It is referring here to the grace given offering of Philippians which are viewed by Paul as a sacrifice. This word actually refers to the sacrifice itself. Here it happens to be a money gift. There are other kinds of sacrifices that Christians give which are not money gifts. This word is actually the sacrifice. It is not the act of giving, and it is not the act of sacrificing, but it is concentrating on the sacrifice itself. Paul is thinking here, you can see, in terms of the Old Testament priesthood where they offered animal sacrifices.

While the Philippians gave this gift to Paul, remember that, as all the sacrifices of the Old Testament, they were ultimately given to God. The sacrifice was to God. So a Christian's sacrifice is always to God. Even if you should take money and say, "I want this money to go to this missionary," you're not giving it to that missionary for his work for the Lord. You're giving it to the Lord. It is important that you understand that. That's one of the first steps to take in developing a divine viewpoint, grace-oriented way of giving, even though individuals may be the direct recipients and beneficiaries of your giving. It has to be understood as being given to the Lord.

This will preserve you from what we were talking about in the previous session – that lust for power that money sometimes triggers in us. You won't be so tempted to try to put screws on the Lord's servants, and to get them to do things your way. You won't want to make them do things by cutting funds off from them, or try to use your money in order to bring them into line. You will realize that the money doesn't go to them. When you try something like that, you are actually putting screws on the person to whom that money does go (whether you understand that it goes to Him or not), and that is to God. What you are actually trying to do is to force God to line up with your thinking. You are trying to force God to take hold of this individual and make him behave the way you think he should behave. So all giving has to be as unto the Lord.

This gift (this sacrifice), therefore, is described as being acceptable. They gave it as unto the Lord. They gave it out of the motivation of God the Holy Spirit, and therefore, they gave it on grace principles: The Greek word for "acceptable" here is "dektos." "Dektos" denotes "something which is regarded as favorably." Here it means that this sacrifice of money which the Philippians gave (because it was given on the right basis, and as unto the Lord) was received by God as an acceptable spiritual sacrifice. In other words, it is possible to give your money where it is perhaps a sacrifice to you, but it is not an acceptable sacrifice to God.

So we translate this simply with the words "an acceptable sacrifice." Money given on legalistic ground is not an acceptable sacrifice. Such unacceptable sacrifices do not receive a reward in heaven. This is an odor of a sweet smell of fragrant odor; a sacrifice acceptable; one that God receives; and, well-pleasing to God. The word "well-pleasing" is "euarestos." "Euarestos" is the word in the Greek language to describe something that a person takes delight in. Here it is well-pleasing to God. It is a sacrifice with which God is pleased. So the grace giving by the Christian priests in Philippi produced a spiritual sacrifice in which God the Father took delight. However, the giving of many Christians today is on such legalistic ground that God is not pleased with it. In fact, it is an offense to Him.

So what verse 18 is saying is this: "But I have received everything in full, and have more than enough. I am well-supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the things from you, a fragrant aroma, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God."

**Old Testament Sacrifices**

Now, to fully appreciate these words, you have to know something about the Old Testament sacrifice system – the Levitical offerings. The apostle Paul knew this. These people that he had taught in Philippi were taught originally from the Old Testament Bible. That's all they had. And they were taught these sacrifices. These five basic Levitical offerings were related to the person and the work of Jesus Christ. So we're going to look, first of all, at these Old Testament sacrifices in order to give you the same frame of reference that Paul has so that you really appreciate what he is saying in verse 18. These five sacrifices were provided by God. You read about them in Leviticus chapters 1 through 7.

These sacrifices were given for the purpose of guiding the Jews in their worship of Jehovah Elohim. These sacrifices were designed to teach something symbolically, and that is the person and the work of Jesus Christ, the promised Jewish Messiah. Remember that people in these days did not generally read. The way they learned was by the instruction of communicators of the Word of God, and they learned by the fact that the Hebrew language thinks in terms of concrete concepts. It does not speak in abstractions. The language does not lend itself to abstractions. Therefore, God prepared a visual aid system by which they could learn spiritual things. These sacrifices, which we have here in Leviticus, are part of that teaching system.

**The Mosaic Law**

The sacrifices of the Mosaic Law system could only be offered through the Levitical priesthood. This was the priesthood descended from the line of Aaron. It was in the tribe of Levi. Aaron was the high priest, and all the priests came from this particular tribe. The system of the Levitical sacrifices was for Jews only. They were never given to gentiles, and they never were given to Christians. That's why we do not bring these particular sacrifices today. However, they were part of the Mosaic Law system, and part of the Jewish way of life. You cannot separate these five sacrifices from the rest of the law system. For that reason, we say that the system of legalism, as represented by the Mosaic Law, is no longer operational. It's dead. It's out of operation – not only these sacrifices, but the whole thing.

**The Levitical Sacrifices Did not Bring Salvation**

The system of the Levitical sacrifices was not meant to bring one to salvation. I don't think I have to go through that with this congregation. You understand that just because a Jew brought one of these five sacrifices, it did not contribute to his getting to heaven. It was not the means of salvation.

For example, Acts 13:39 says, "And by Him, all that believe are justified from all things (meaning sins), from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses." There was nothing in the Law of Moses that will enable a person to be saved by means of those rituals.

Romans 3:20 says, "Therefore, by the deeds of the law (that is, keeping the rituals of the law), there shall no flesh be justified in His sight. For by the law is the knowledge of sin." If you read and study the Law of Moses, you'll learn a great deal about what God considers to be sinful. But you will not find how to be saved through the keeping of those rituals.

Romans 3:28 says, "Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law." If a Jew never performed a single one of these sacrifices, he could go to heaven. He could be born again. As a matter of fact, if he was not born again before he performed these sacrifices, he would not be born again after he performed them, just because he had offered these sacrifices through the priesthood.

Galatians 2:16 adds to that concept: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. Even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Here in Philippians 3:9, we learned some time ago this same principle: "And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law." The law produced a certain kind of human justification, but that won't take you to heaven. "But that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." The apostle Paul could boast that he had a perfect record of human righteousness, and that he didn't break any of the rules. He could say that when he did break them, he immediately took the proper action in the sacrifices and in confession, so that he could call himself blameless before the law. Yet, he was on his way to the lake of fire. He was not born again until he met Jesus Christ on the Damascus Road.

Then there is one more very excellent verse. Hebrews 10:4 says, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." So let's have it understood at this point now that these sacrifices of these animals was not the basis upon which a person was saved in the Old Testament. Performing the sacrifices did not bring you into eternal life.

**What the Levitical Sacrifices Taught**

What the Levitical sacrifices provided was instruction in a pre-literate age. Through the rituals, the Jews learned about the work that the coming Messiah Savior was going to perform. Through these rituals and sacrifices, these pre-literate Jews learned what kind of a person the Messiah Savior was going to be. They learned how redemption was going to be achieved. They learned how the wall separating God from man was going to be removed, and reconciliation achieved. They learned what happens when you sinned deliberately (and you know that you sinned), and what to do about it. They learned what to do about the times you sinned, and you didn't know that you sinned (you were not aware of it), and what they must do about that. All of these things were taught to them via these sacrifices.

**The Levitical Sacrifices**

Here are the Levitical sacrifices. There were five basic ones:

1. **The Burnt Offering**

Number one was called the burnt offering. The burnt offering teaches the doctrine of redemption, particularly emphasizing the fact of propitiation. It emphasizes redemption in terms of the work of Jesus Christ in salvation, in His work of burying the sins of mankind. The burnt offering was first in line, and it stressed redemption. It stressed it in terms of the work of Christ, and it stressed it in terms of the fact that propitiation had taken place. Propitiation means that God the Father was satisfied in His holiness (that is, in His justice), and in His righteousness relative to sin. His Holiness was satisfied. That's propitiation. This stressed Christ in His work. That's important because the next one also stresses redemption, but it looks upon Christ, this time, in His person – a different emphasis.

1. **The Meal Offering**

The second offering was called the meal offering. Sometimes it's called the gift offering, or even sometimes the food offering. It was obviously a bloodless offering. Four of these offerings have blood involved. One of them, this one, did not. This one also was illustrative of the doctrine of redemption. It taught, again, the concept of propitiation (God is satisfied relative to our sins). But the emphasis was on the person of Christ – who He was: that is, His impeccability. It taught the fact that He was not only sinless, but that He could not sin; that He was the God-man; and, that He was a unique person.

1. **The Peace Offering**

The third offering was called the peace offering. The peace offering taught the doctrine of reconciliation. It dealt with the wall separating God and man, and how that had been removed.

These three offerings (burnt, meal, and peace) are the ones which are described in the Scriptures as being an offering of a fragrant odor. The reason for this is because they portray Jesus Christ in His sinless perfection, and in His absolute devotion to the will of God the Father. Therefore, these offerings always delighted God the Father. The burnt, the meal, and the peace offerings were voluntary. A Jew did not have to bring these. He was not required to do this. He did this on his own as a recognition of the grace of God to him.

There were two other offerings that were in a different category.

1. **The Sin Offering**

Number 4 was called the sin offering. The sin offering taught the doctrine of temporal fellowship. It dealt particularly with the unknown sins – when I sin and I don't know it – when the Jew sinned and he did not know that he sinned. This was the non-willful sinning. The sin offering was necessary to deal with that sin when the individual became aware of the problem, or even if he did not ever become aware of the problem. He knew by the very fact of his construction as a human being with an old sin nature, that there are some times when he sins, and when he is out of the will of God. Therefore, periodically he would bring the sin offering.

1. **The Peace Offering**

The fifth one was called the trespass offering. The trespass offering dealt with those deliberate known sins. It also taught the doctrine of temporal fellowship.

These last two offerings were in a different category from the other three in the fact that they were the non-fragrant odor. The reason for this is because here the Son of God, under these offerings, was portrayed as the One who is enmeshed with our sins; who is covered with our sins; who is bearing our sins; and, who has upon Him the offense of the holiness of God being violated because of sin being placed upon Him.

This information about the person and the work of Jesus Christ was spoken by Jehovah God to Moses from the door of the Tabernacle. He didn't get this information on Mount Sinai where he got the Law (the Ten Commandments, and all the rest of it). This was brought to them subsequently, and it was spoken after the tabernacle was erected, and Jehovah God was in the Holy of Holies. Here at the door of the tabernacle, Moses stood, and God communed with him and explained to him these five basic offerings.

The mental attitude with which these sacrifices were made determined whether they were acceptable to God on the part of the worshiper for the purpose for which he brought them. This is not a mere external ritual. The Word of God tried to make it clear that this had, through the centuries, been the mistake that the Jews made, and which greatly offended God. He was offended by the fact that they went through a ritual (by-the-number) system of bringing these offerings, and they were totally meaningless to these people as far as themselves internally.

You remember that in Philippians, we have studied in some detail the significance of the ritual of circumcision. The Jews had come to the point where that ritual (which described the taking away of the old sin nature's power over a human being who had received by faith what God was going to provide some day for the Jew in the form of a Savior) had been completely lost. It had been completely lost that that was what that was signifying. So they believed that by the mere act of circumcision, a person could be born again. And nothing was farther from the truth, for the ritual was simply a ritual. It was just a portrayal. It was just a picture. The reality was on the inside, that to which the person by faith had committed himself. So the attitude in which these five offerings were brought was critical to their usefulness.

For example, Isaiah 1:11 says, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? The Lord said, 'I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs, or of he goats. When you come to appear before Me, who has required this at your hand to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot bear. It is iniquity, even the solemn meetings. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates. They are a trouble unto me. I am weary of bearing them."

God is speaking forcefully concerning his being offended by what? The very sacrifices He prescribed. But why? Because of the way they were bringing them, and because of their internal mental attitude.

So verse 15 says, "And when you spread forth your hands, I'll hide My eyes from you. When you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourself. Make yourselves clean. Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil. Learn to do well. Seek justice. Relieve the oppressed. Judge the fatherless. Plead for the widow." Do these things that are right, and then come and bring Me your offerings: that is the point.

In Hosea 5:6 we read, "They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord, and they shall not find Him. He has withdrawn Himself from them."

Then in Hosea 6:6: "For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." What God is saying is, "I want you to know doctrine, and to be functioning on it – that first, then bring Me your offerings. But your offerings, without an appropriate relationship to the Word of God, are nothing."

Amos 5:21: "'I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not take delight in your solemn assemblies. Though you offer me burnt offerings and your meal offerings, I will not accept them. Neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take away from me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your harps. But let justice run down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream. Have you offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O House of Israel? But you have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which you made to yourselves. Therefore, I will cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus,' says the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts."

The Jews, by the time that Amos came on the scene, had become so completely detached from the significance of these offerings that they were actually presenting these offerings to God while worshiping Moloch. I think all of you are acquainted with Moloch. He was one of the worst expressions of heathen deity among the Canaanites. Moloch was the guy who sat there with a fat pot-belly; with an opening in front of him; with his arms resting across his stomach; and, with a hideous-looking face. This opening in front, which was really an opening in his stomach, was a furnace. Inside that furnace was the intense flame, and they worshipped the Moloch god by throwing their infant children into the opening through his stomach.

Then they would have musicians. He says, "I'm sick of your harp playing." It wasn't because they were bad musicians. It was because this very thing they were using in their idol worship. They were playing their instruments to drown out the screams of the babies. This is why this was accompanied also by the complete abandonment of the sex orgies that accompanied the worship of Moloch. Now, this is what the Jews were doing – not the heathen. They learned it from the heathen, but the Jews were doing it. They were taking their infant children, and getting a thrill out of hearing them scream as they were burned alive in the furnace of Moloch.

God says, "You people must be absolutely out of your minds." Well, they were. They were spiritually insane. "You're doing that, and you're bringing Me these offerings?" You see how completely detached they had become from what these offering signified. These offerings, which should have been a fragrant odor in the nostrils of God, were a stench onto high heaven. They were under His judgment and His condemnations.

**The Details of the Burnt Offering**

Let's look at where the burnt offering is described. I think if you understand how one of these functions, you'll have a deeper appreciation for the whole Levitical offering system, and the meaning of Paul's remark concerning Christian giving as a sacrifice of substance, which is a fragrant odor to God. This burnt offering is described in Leviticus 1:2-17, and in Leviticus 6:8-13.

First of all, this was a voluntary offering. It expressed positive volition on the part of the Jew toward the promised Savior. He did not have to do this. He did this as an expression of his love for God. This offering conveys the concept of a perfect substitute sacrifice for another's sins. It pictured the fact that Jesus Christ was born as the sinless Lamb of God. I hope you understand that that means He was born without an old sin nature.

I found somebody recently who was surprised and who was downright puzzled by the fact that Jesus Christ was not born with a sin nature. He thought that Jesus being sinless meant that he never performed an act of sin. Well, that's true, but that would not have qualified Him to be a Savior. In order to find somebody who could die spiritually for the sins of the world (because that's what the price for the sin of the world is), you had to find somebody who was spiritually alive. If a person is born with an old sin nature, the minute he takes his first breath on earth, he dies spiritually because he has an old sin nature, and he's born physically alive, but spiritually dead. Therefore, it was not possible for anybody to die for the sins of the world unless he himself was spiritually alive. That's why it was necessary for Christ to be born of a virgin, so that he did not get the old sin nature transmitted to Him through the father.

**Jesus Portrayed in the Burnt Offering**

So Jesus Christ is portrayed in the burnt offering as a sinless Lamb of God with no old sin nature and no acts of sin. It pictures Him as bearing the judgment of God's wrath against the sins of the world. He did not do that in His life. Jesus was not burying the sins of the world while He walked around Palestine, and while He walked up and down those dusty roads teaching the Word of God. He was not then bearing the sins of the world. He was not then securing salvation for us.

The time that He secured salvation was from 12:00 noon (high noon) to 3:00 in the afternoon as He hung on the cross. At 12:00 noon, the actual sacrifice in behalf of the sins of the world began. For three hours, He went through that intense agony. At the climax of everything He had suffered up until then, that's why he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?" In that moment, from 12:00 noon on, Jesus Christ was left to Himself. He was separated from the Father and from the Holy Spirit. This was symbolized by the fact that high noon became darkness in the city of Jerusalem. Darkness descended while the Son of God bore the shame and the agony of the sins of the world. So this burnt offering pictures Him as the perfect sinless lamb in those last three hours on the cross.

**The Animals Used in the Burnt Offering**

In the burnt offering, you brought an animal, but you brought an animal according to your economic status. The first animal that a person would bring was from the herd. That is, he would bring a bullock or an ox. That was an expensive animal. "From the herd" is described in verses 2-9. This was the sacrifice that people were expected to bring who were financially well off. It had to be a male without blemish, again, signifying the male Jesus Christ, the God-man, without the old sin nature and without an act of sin. The use of a bullock or an ox signified in pictures Christ as the patient servant of God.

However, if you were a middle-class Jew (in a middle-class income bracket), you could not afford to bring such an expensive animal in sacrifice. Therefore, you were not restricted from being able to express this voluntary love and appreciation toward God through the burnt offering which pleased God when you brought it. You remember I told you in the previous session that people who have excess funds, who use them in the right way to advance the Lord's work, cause God's people to praise God and to thank Him, and thus to send up an odor that is a fragrant odor in the nostrils of God. So this burnt offering was a fragrant odor that God welcomed, and that was a blessing to the offerer. So you were not denied that just because you didn't have the money to bring a bullock.

The second classification that we have in Leviticus 1:10-13 is from the flock. Now, from the flock, again, has to be a male without blemish. The Jews knew this. Later on (would you believe it?), these characters began prostituting these offerings by trying to slip in (and they did slip in) blind animals, or they slipped in some animal that was sick or diseased. It was going to die anyhow, so they thought, "I might as well give it as an offering to God." That's the kind of things they were shoveling in to the offerings before God. "From the flock" meant that it was a sheep or goat. This pictured Christ as the unresisting sinless Lamb of God bearing the sins of the world.

But if you're not even in the middle class, and you were really a poor Jew, then you were allowed to bring a bird (verses 14-17) – either a turtle dove or a pigeon. This pictured Christ as the resurrected One – the heavenly One rising from the dead.

**The Steps of the Burnt Offering**

There were certain steps in the sacrifice of the bullock, and we'll briefly go through those. The worshiper, first of all, had to select a suitable animal for sacrifice. He brought this animal to the altar where the priest was waiting. It had to be a perfect specimen because it represented the sinless Jesus Christ. This animal was a healthy animal, and therefore, usually very strong, and had done nothing to deserve death. Again, this was picturing the condition of Jesus Christ. Christ was perfect spiritually; He was perfect physically; He was perfect mentally; and, not deserving of death.

The second step was that the worshiper firmly laid his hands on the animal to identify the animal with his sins. This represented the transfer of the sin to the animal as it was portraying the transfer of our sins to the coming Messiah. This was done to Jesus Christ on the cross. 2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us He who knew no sin became sin for us. That's where our sin was placed upon Him – not while He walked the streets of Palestine teaching, but the last three hours on the cross is when God (so to speak) took that cup that he did not want to drink, and just turned it over and just sloshed all the sewage of human sin all over the Son of God on that cross. That was an unimaginable, horrendous act for a sinless person.

Now, God accepts this substitute, and He spares the guilty sinner. By this laying on of hands, God accepts the substitute for the sinner. It pictures the atonement for sin. Atonement means a covering. The worshiper then proceeded to kill the animal. He did this by cutting the animal's throat, and he allowed the blood to pump out. He stood there, and he watched this strong, healthy animal gradually weaken, and finally fall over and die. Was it all because the animal had done something? No. It was all because the worshiper had sinned. That animal was dying because the worshiper was a sinner. This symbolized the spiritual and physical deaths of Christ on the cross, of course. It is a shocking sight, but it made very clear what the Savior would have to pay for our sins.

Put yourself in that place: you're standing at the altar; you've got this animal; here's this goat, or here's this lamb; you grab it by the muzzle; you pull back its head; you take the knife; you run it across the throat; and, the blood comes pumping out in spurts and splatters you; splatters the priest; and, splatters the area all around. Right before your eyes, this perfect animal slowly fall over in death.

While this was taking place, the priest caught the blood in a container, and he disposed of it in the prescribed manner around the altar. The worshiper then skinned the animal and he cut it into pieces. The skinning demonstrated that there was no blemish under the hide, and there was no blemish under the skin, so this was a legitimate bonafide sacrifice. The physical sufferings on the cross of Jesus Christ were again thereby depicted.

Then the priest put the parts of the animal on the fire which was burning upon the altar. This burning depicted, of course, the judgment of God upon sin. This picture was all accomplished on the altar, just like all of salvation was on the cross, and no place else. So the worshiper had no part in this burning process. Salvation is by grace. It is by Christ alone. All the worshiper had to do now was to stand and watch the priest take this animal and put the parts on there. What they put on it was the head of the animal, and they had stripped the fat of the animal, and that was laid alongside of it. This was symbolically speaking of the purity of the mind of Christ, and of His overt righteousness – the fat surrounding the external parts of the animal. So Christ was qualified to be mankind, both internally and externally.

Then they took the viscera (the innards of the animal) and the legs. They washed them in water, and then they put them on the altar, and they burned them. The viscera represented the internal relationship of the person to God, and the legs, represented the external relationship. The washing represented the cleansing by the Word of God to produce a godly life. All that was taking place on that altar was the result of the Word of God which was cleansing this person. This offering was described as a fragrant odor (a sweet savor type), and it pictured Christ in His perfection, obedient to the will of God, ready to bear the sins of the world.

The fire that burned on the altar was symbolic of God's holiness. You can read about that in Hebrews 12:28-29. This fire stood for the judgment of what God's holiness condemns (Genesis 19:24). This fire speaks of the manifestation of God Himself and what He approves (Exodus 3:2). This fire speaks of purification as we studied in 1 Corinthians 3:12-14 on the judgment of the believer's works.

Finally, the last step of this process was that the remainder (the carcass and the ashes) were disposed of in a prescribed way. The priest was given the skin. He could use the skin. He could benefit by it, just as Adam and Eve were covered by a skin which represented the death of some animal to cover their sin. Their stupid fig leaf clothes, that were going to dry up and crack and break off anyhow, were replaced by God's provision – not their human good provision, but God's divine good provision to cover their sins.

The priest, in effect, could put this skin as a robe around him, and thus symbolically be encased in all that this animal represented of atonement before God for sins. The ashes and the rest of the remains were to be thrown out, representing the fact that once God has dealt with sin, it is gone. It is never held against us again, and never brought before us again.

We will look a little more in detail next time at some of the other features of the burnt offering. But I think you can already see that, to the extent that people understood this offering, it was a very thrilling description about what God in His grace was going to do for the Jews someday. Certainly, when Paul says, "Your giving of your money is comparable to one of these offerings, like the burnt offering, which is a fragrance in God's nostrils," you can see what he meant by what is fragrant to God. That is acceptable and pleasing. God is delighted with it. If you compare that to the burnt offering, which so beautifully portrayed the work of Jesus Christ, you can see why that was so pleasing to God. And to compare the giving of our money to that kind of pleasure on the part of God, as He takes in the work of His Son, shows you that you and I as priests have some very fabulous sacrifices that we can make, not the least of which is the sacrifice of our material possessions.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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