***The Peace Offering - PH91-01
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 4:14-19***

Heathen sacrifices are, as you know, a humanly devised effort to appease the anger of some beings supposedly who are gods, and to somehow gain their favor. These sacrifices are, of course, just purely satanic in origin, and they are counterfeits for a genuine system of sacrifice which the living God has created. Heathen sacrifices are based upon fear because these gods bear the qualities of man's own selfishness and evil. Therefore, these gods have been made in man's image, and therefore, men fear these gods. The sacrifices which these gods receive do not in any way portrayed any kindness on their part toward the sacrificer (toward the offerer). They do not present anything in behalf of mankind. It is all somehow to do something for the gods.

However, we have been studying the sacrifices of the Mosaic Law which were divine in their origin and which reveal God's grace toward mankind. The Levitical offerings actually portrayed what God himself was in His essence, and what He was doing to bring blessing into the stream of humanity. He brought blessing in such a way that God himself did not violate His own holiness – that all justice and all righteousness was firmly kept intact within His being. These sacrifices were brought by the offerer out of gratitude to God, not out of fear. They were brought out of an expression of affection for what God had done. These Levitical sacrifices were pleasing to God because of the truths which they portrayed concerning His Son, Jesus Christ.

So we have two entirely different sacrificial systems here on planet earth. One was originated with Satan; it was humanly devised; it was totally meaningless; and, it was seeking to satiate a vicious set of gods. The other one was divine in origin, in which God finds a fragrant aroma, and which He accepts and which has great meaning. The Old Testament sacrificial system was, therefore, very important in the life of the Old Testament believer, and it was very important to God before Whom these offerings were made.

**The Peace Offering**

We're going to look at the third offering in the series that we've been looking at, and that is the peace offering. We've had a little introduction to this one. We have this in Leviticus 3, and we find a supplementary description in Leviticus 7:11-34. First of all, we'll look at the meaning of this offering, the peace offering. This is the last of what is called the sweet savor (or the fragrant aroma) offerings. We have had the burnt offering, the meal offering, and now the peace offering. This too, like the other two, is a voluntary offering portraying the fact of reconciliation. Reconciliation has to do with the removal of the barrier which sin has created between God and man.

The peace offering demonstrated this great relationship between a human being and his God – that the living God has removed the wall of sin. This wall had had its various blocks that sin created. God has been satisfied with what His Son did to remove that wall. Man has now been made savable. That is, he has been reconciled to God, so that now God and man face one another. God never had to be reconciled. God never had to be changed. There wasn't any problem with God. The problem was with man. But now man is facing in the direction of God, and all he has to do is step across the line and be reconciled to God.

The peace offering demonstrated this tremendous thing. Man is born with a nature of sin, and therefore, he is unfit for fellowship with God. Man is inclined to evil. Therefore, he has no peace with God. There is nothing but conflict between himself and God. As a matter of fact, man is so ill at ease with God that he just wants to dismiss God. He dismisses him by creating his own God, and his own way of approach to that God. Thus you have the heathen sacrifices.

What the peace offering stresses then is the finished work of Christ on the cross for the sins of the world as the basis of all peace between a sinner and a holy God. You cannot make your own peace with God. God had to make peace for you. God had to reach out for us in our sins to reconcile us to Himself. That's what 2 Corinthians 5:19 is saying to us.

So the peace offering declares that God has been propitiated, and the sinner has been reconciled. So the divine appeal to us in 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 is, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we beg you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God, for He has made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

**Devotional Areas of Truth**

So we are called upon to step across the line and to fulfill this which was demonstrated by the peace offering. Let's look at the procedure of this offering. This study of the Old Testament sacrifices is a little different than some of our other studies in Scripture, because this is what we call devotional areas of truth. These are the areas that God has put here and there in Scripture simply for meditating upon. These are presented in the pictorial visual aid fashion so that the people of the Old Testament could learn these things. But they are not the kinds of things that we'll be getting into, say, when we study Revelation, where we'll be getting some astounding historical predictions, and that sort of thing. It is not even what we get in Romans in our study there, which is a very orderly, logical explanation of what God has done in the whole realm of redemption. This is a pictorial presentation.

We need to you think about these sacrifices. And we're just really skimming them more because we don't want to get bogged down too deeply. We're just trying to show you how important these sacrifices were. When God says, "They're a fragrant aroma to Me," we should understand why they're a fragrant aroma, and how they deal with the most precious thing that God has, which is His Son. Then He comes along in the New Testament and leads the apostle Paul to say that your offering of your money is in the same category of a fragrant aroma to Me as what My Son has done to save the world from sin. When you enter by meditation into these offerings, you will appreciate, therefore, the sacrifices that we as Christian priests make, and which we'll be getting around to in short order.

In the peace offering, you could offer three animals. Number one, you used a bullock. A bullock is a young male ox. This animal, when it was used, represented Jesus Christ as the obedient servant, because the bullock (the young ox) was a work animal. This is the animal that you have described Leviticus 3:1, in that it could be an offering from the herd. Secondly, it would be an offering from the flock. That could be a lamb or it could be a goat. All three of these animals were used in the peace offering. The lamb represented Christ as the One who was appointed to die for the sins of the world. He was the One who was to pay for the wages of sin. This is what we have described in verse 6, that he could have an offering from the flock.

Then in verse 12, we have the statement that he could bring as an offering a goat before the Lord. The goat portrayed Christ as the sinner's substitute in death – the sin bearer. The lamb always was viewed as Christ paying for sins. The goat was viewed as the one who was bearing sins. It is a little different aspect of the same salvation.

The animals, interestingly enough, this time, could have been male or female, all the way down the line. There was a reason for this. If you brought a male animal, this symbolized authority. In Scripture, authority always resides with males. Here we have the picture of Christ who chose, under His own authority, by active obedience, to die on the cross. But if you brought a female animal, you also symbolized something about Jesus Christ, and that was the One who was responsive to authority, because the female role is that of responder to authority. Here Jesus Christ is viewed as the One who is responding with passive obedience to the Father who is sending Him to the cross. So the male animal pictured Christ actively going to the cross, while the female animal pictured impassively receiving punishment for the sins of the world.

In either case, the animal must be without any physical imperfection in order to be consistent with the picture of the sinlessness of Jesus Christ.

The procedure was very simple. You brought this animal up to that brazen altar – that altar out in the courtyard. By the way, let's get that laid out for you. There was the courtyard with an entrance. Inside the courtyard was the tabernacle. The back one-third was the Holy of Holies. The front one-third was the Holy Place. It was thirty feet on one side; fifteen feet on the side; and, fifteen feet in height. Then there was the laver, and the brazen alter where the sacrifices were made. So we're talking now about the brazen altar.

The person came into the courtyard and brought his animal up to the altar. He placed his hand upon the animal's head to symbolize that he was making this animal the substitute for his sins. The sins were being imputed to the animals, even as Christ received our sins. We have this in verse two, for example: "And he shall lay his hand upon the head of this offering," and that laying of the hand upon the head of the offering signified placing the sins upon that animal. We have this in verse 8 and in verse 13.

Then the offerer pulled the animal's head back; cut his throat; and, killed him, right there at the brazen altar. This is even as the life of Christ, which was to come, was poured out. So in verses 2, 8, and 13 we have this declared: "And he shall kill it at the door of the tabernacle." That means right in front of the door of the tabernacle. First you came to this altar. He shall kill it right there. The sons of Aaron, the priests, would sprinkle the blood on the altar around about. After the animal was killed, the blood (portraying the death of Christ on behalf of our sins) was sprinkled around on this altar.

Then the various portions of fat from the animal were cut out and burned on the altar along with the kidneys. We have this described in each of the three categories of animals in verses 3-4, 9-10, and 14-15. Fat was the richest part of the animal. This pictured the finest human being that ever lived. The fat of the animal in God's eyes represented what was the best of the animal. That's why we use that expression like "living off the fat of the land." The idea was that the finest was described under the symbol of fat. Therefore, the finest human being that ever lived, the perfect Man, Jesus Christ, was represented by the animal's fat. The grace of God gave His finest for the worst of sinners.

The kidneys in the Old Testament order were viewed as a center of emotion, and so consequently, the kidneys were burned as an expression of the love of God for the sinner that moved the Son of God to choose to give Himself in behalf of unholy sinners. So the fat was Jesus Christ in His finest qualities as a human being. The kidneys expressed all of the emotion of love that God had for sinners that moved Him to do this.

These parts were burned right on this altar of sacrifice. Verse 5 tells us that when the smoke arose from the wood and the animal fat and kidneys burning on this altar, that this offering was a sweet savor onto the Lord. It was a fragrant aroma. Again, it was a fragrant aroma because of the beauty that is portrayed about Jesus Christ. This was not Jesus Christ as a sinner. That would not be a fragrant aroma. It was not Jesus Christ in carnality. That would not be a fragrant aroma. But it represented Jesus Christ as the finest; the dearest; the most perfect; and, the most affectionate of all human beings given in behalf of the sins of the world. This was pleasing to the Father.

**Thanksgiving**

So it was called a sweet fragrance in verse 5 and verse 16. In Leviticus 7:11, we have a little more information concerning this offering. We'll just briefly run through it. At your leisure, you may read Leviticus 7:11-34. Leviticus 7:11 tells us that one reason that people would bring the peace offering would be in order to express thanksgiving: "If you offer it for thanksgiving, then he shall offer it with the sacrifice of thanksgiving," and so on. So here was a thanksgiving day situation for the Jew. On a thanksgiving day occasion, when he just wanted to say, "Thank you, God," he would bring the peace offering.

Then something very different was done. The peace offering was then always accompanied by a meal offering. You've learned already that the meal offering represented the sinless humanity of Jesus Christ. So the peace offering (representing reconciliation) and the meal offering (representing the sinless humanity of Jesus Christ) always go together. You could not have had reconciliation if you did not have a sinless person in the form of Christ to die as the offering. So it was a combination offering.

There is also something else as you read this passage. Verse 13 tells us that this thanksgiving sacrifice of the peace offering is to be accompanied by leavened bread. Now, that is most unusual because we have learned that leaven is a symbol of evil. Throughout these sacrifices, in order to picture Christ properly, fermentation had to be removed because fermentation is degeneration. Fermentation is corruption. There could have been no leavening quality in these sacrifices. Yet here, when you come to thank God with this peace offering, the offerer is instructed to bring along with it bread made with yeast. It had leaven in it.

Now, of course, the symbolism is consistent here. This is not inconsistent because this bread of leaven does not represent Christ here, but it represents the offerer. It has to do with the person who is worshiping. The person who is worshiping (such as ourselves) indeed has leaven within him because we all have an old sin nature. So here we have pictured in this way the fact that we, who yet being under an old sin nature, can bring a peace offering with God. We, with an old sin nature, can have peace with God.

That principle is what tore the heart out of Martin Luther. Martin Luther, as a priest who did all of the things that the Roman Catholic system told him to do in order to establish peace with God, could not come to a position of ease in his own mind because he always saw something in himself that bothered him: sin. He always saw an old sin nature, and he kept asking himself, "How can I be at peace with God when I have an old sin nature?"

Had Martin Luther understood these offerings, he would have caught this one right here, and it would have been a great help to him, as Romans finally was when he remembered the passage that said the just are saved by faith and not by works. He would have realized here that here was a person who is bringing an expression of the peace offering in thanksgiving to God, declaring, "God, you and I are at peace with one another." At the same time, he was bringing bread with leaven in it, indicating that, "I'm at peace with you while I have an old sin nature." If Luther had understood that, he would have caught that immediately that here is the answer. God is doing something that makes it possible for a person who still has an old sin nature, somehow in His eyes, to appear as being perfect, and thus at peace with Himself.

Of course, we learn in the New Testament Scripture that the answer to this is that he has imputed to us the righteousness of Christ. We have His absolute righteousness. We are positionally in Christ. We have an old sin nature now, but when God sees us, He sees us in the perfection of Christ. The time is coming when the old sin nature will be gone, and we will no longer offer a peace offering with leavened bread. But this is the significance of leavened bread here – that there is still sin in the worshiper.

Part of the animal was not burned on the altar in this thanksgiving expression, but logically enough, it was eaten by the priest. But it was also eaten by the worshiper the same day. If it was an offering in behalf of a vow (a person thanking God by making a promise of some kind), he had two days to eat it. You read this in Leviticus 7:15-16.

So here's the picture we have. We have the peace offering, and it's brought for the purpose of thanksgiving. It is for thanksgiving because there is peace between God and man. Now, God says, "That is a fragrant aroma to Me." So there is God. There is also the priest. The priest offers the sacrifice, and he eats part of it. So the priest and God are in fellowship with one another. Then there is the offerer, or the worshiper. He also eats of this sacrifice. So there is fellowship between the priest and the offerer, and between God and the offerer. So here you have a complete picture of a triune fellowship which is established here at the peace offering between the priest (representing man to God); between God; and, between the worshiper. We call the offerer the sinner; ultimately, the priest was Jesus Christ; and, God was the Father. So we have a perfect relationship established and demonstrated by this peace offering, all based upon the reconciliation of Jesus Christ.

But there was one thing that a person was warned not to do. We have this in Leviticus 7:19-21. These verses warned the Jew about being in a condition of sin. That is the condition of what is called ceremonial uncleanliness, or we would call it being out of temporal fellowship. He is warned that if he is in that condition, "Don't bring your offering."

Notice beginning at Leviticus 7:19: "And the flesh that touches any unclean thing shall not be eaten. It shall be burned with fire. As for the flesh, all who are clean shall eat thereof. But the soul that eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings that pertain unto the Lord, having his uncleanness upon him (out of temporal fellowship), even that soul shall be cut off from his people. Moreover, the soul that shall touch any unclean thing, as the uncleanness of man, or any unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offerings, which pertain until the Lord, even that soul shall be cut off from his people."

There were certain things that a Jew could not do because he was ceremonially unclean. For example, he could not touch a dead body. If he ever touched a dead body (a dead human being), he had to go through a certain ritual to reestablish ceremonial cleansing. So here he is warned, under this picture, that if he is in a state of ceremonial uncleanness (or this is describing being out of temporal fellowship), then don't bring your peace offering. Don't come to God with thanksgiving. Of course, that is a tremendous picture because this is exactly what we are not to do.

How many Christians who are out of fellowship are trying to make great decisions relative to their lives; to their service; or, to what God wants them to do? They don't understand that God has said, "I will give you no guidance." Because why? "Because you are pretending that there is peace between us, and peace has been disrupted. You and I are not at peace. So don't come talking to Me," God says, "because I've got nothing to say to you until you get rid of your uncleanness. Fellowship with God cannot be separated from the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. So when you eat the peace offering, you must also be in a proper personal spiritual condition to eat this offering. It's not how you feel about it. It's what God thinks about it.

There was something else that was not to be eaten by the Jews. They were not to eat any of the fat of the animal because that represented the best that God had to offer – the perfect humanity of Jesus Christ. That was only God's to enjoy. Nor were they to eat the blood, because the blood represented the work of Christ on the cross, and no one can share in that. So Jews are forbidden to either eat fat or to eat blood, because, again, the symbolic meanings of these two qualities: the fat, representing the finest of the humanity of Christ (only God can enjoy that); and, the blood representing the death of Christ on behalf of sins which only He could give. But the priests, the sons of Aaron, were permitted to eat the breast and the right shoulder of the animal. Leviticus 7:32-34 tells us this. The breast represented the affections; and, the right shoulder represented the strength.

So what does all this mean? Well, the significance of not eating the fat and not eating the blood is to declare to us that salvation is something that only God can provide. Only He could give the fat – a perfect human being. Only He could give the blood – the life which was qualified to die in behalf of the sins of the world. That's expressed in the New Testament in Ephesians 2:8-9 about salvation being by grace, and in Titus 3:5 that it is not by our own works of righteousness.

The result of this sacrifice, the peace offering, portrayed two facts that were true now. One was peace in terms of being peace with God. We have that in Romans 5:1 where the apostle Paul uses that phrase: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Peace with God relates to personal salvation. It has to do with being in the outer circle of eternal fellowship. It's the product of the grace of God. The wall has been removed between God and the sinner. Faith steps across the line, and peace with God is established. So when the Bible speaks of peace with God, it just means eternal fellowship relationship in salvation. This is one of the things that the peace offering portrayed.

It also portrayed a second thing, and that is the peace *of* God. We have already studied this in Philippians 4:7, which says, "And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." That's the inner circle of temporal fellowship. This also was portrayed by the peace offering. This relates to your personal spirituality. It's the product of the confession of known sins. It means inner happiness here.

So the peace offering was a tremendous offering. It was used sometimes just to express thanksgiving. It was voluntary. A person didn't have to bring it, but it portrayed the fact that the wall between God and man has been removed.

That completes the three sweet savor offerings. Then Leviticus gives us two more offerings, which we'll look at briefly. These were not a fragrant aroma to of God. Here were two offerings which God was not pleased to see, but which He required. These were not voluntary. These were compulsory.

**The Sin Offering**

The first one was called the sin offering. We have this now in Leviticus 4, and we have it also described a little more in Leviticus 6:24-30. First of all, we'll look at the nature of this offering. This is provided for a person who is guilty of a sin without being aware of it – unintentional sinning. Now, we've already seen, in the peace offering, that when a Jew came, God recognized that he had an old sin nature, and yet he could bring an offering that declared, "There is peace between you and me, God." He declared his own old sin nature by the fact that he brought leavened bread along with that offering.

Because this was the case, the old sin nature was going to express itself sometimes without the Jew knowing that it was doing so. This offering was related to believers who unknowingly left the inner circle of temporal fellowship. He was born again, but he had an old sin nature.

He had a big problem in the Old Testament because he didn't have the indwelling Holy Spirit to help him to overcome the old sin nature. We should not have as much trouble today in sinning unintentionally. Most of our sinning is not unintentional. Most of our sinning is not sins of ignorance. Most of our sinning is not our doing something wrong without realizing it. Most of our sinning is deliberate and willful: "I'm going to do it" – carnality. But the Jew in the Old Testament had a much harder time. There was no power within him to be able to resist evil. Once he was in the status of carnality, when the old sin nature cropped up and expressed itself, he couldn't go any further with God. He needed restoration of fellowship. The Old Testament provided this means of the sin offering for the restoration of fellowship when a person had sinned unintentionally.

These were sometimes due to ignorance of the commandments of God, or due to ignorance of application of a truth in the situation. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The phrase "all unrighteousness" refers to the sin offering for unintentional sinning. The very fact that God says, "You must bring this kind of an offering" indicated that even when you don't know you're doing wrong, you're guilty. Even when you don't mean to sin, if you sin, you're guilty before God. If you don't know a portion of doctrine, and then you proceed to violate that portion of doctrine, that doesn't make any difference. You're still guilty. That is a principle of the Word of God. If in the Old Testament, you never realized that you should not eat ham, and you proceed to eat ham, you didn't mean to sin, but you would have sinned. Because you did that, you violated a principle of God's commandments, and you were guilty before Him.

All sin has to be dealt with by God. God's justice does not ignore sin because it says, "Well, Jane didn't really mean that. Joe didn't mean to do that. Joe didn't realize he was sinning, so therefore, we don't count that." That's how you and I deal with it. That's our justice. When our children do something wrong, one of the first things we want to know is, "Did you do this deliberately? Did you know this was wrong? Did you realize you weren't supposed to do this?" If they can make a pretty good case that they didn't realize they were doing wrong, we forgive them. Well, they're still guilty, whether they realized it was wrong or not. From God's point of view, He cannot just ignore it and forget it like parents can. For God to forgive a believer's unknown sins, and to retain His holiness at the same time, God has to have a ground for forgiveness. That ground has to be that the sin has been paid for by the punishment of the individual or a qualified substitute.

God's justice has no alternative to the guilt of sin except punishment. There is no alternative to God's justice. There is no alternative to God's righteousness for sin except punishment. It either has to be punishment of the person who did it, or punishment of a qualified substitute.

The sin offering had various procedures for different people. Interestingly enough, you'll find that the sin offering specifies categories of human beings. First, what if a priest sins? A priest may have sinned without meaning – a spiritual leader does the wrong thing unintentionally. He didn't realize it was sin. We have this in Leviticus 4:3-12. Secondly, what if the whole congregation sins – all the congregation of Israel? In Leviticus 4:13-21, the whole group sinned. The body sinned as a whole. They didn't realize that what they were doing was wrong. What happens then? And then what about somebody who's a ruler? He's in political authority. He's in civil authority. What if a ruler sins unintentionally? There was a prescription for that. Then there were what the Bible calls the common people – the ordinary citizen. When he sins (Leviticus 4:27-35), what happens then?

Well, here's the procedure. Let's look first of all at the anointed priests in Leviticus 4:3-12. Remember that the priest held the most important position in Israel. The priest was the teacher of the commandments of God. The priest was the representative of the people before God. Now, when a priest sins, it's more than involving himself. Because he represented the nation of Israel when he sinned, it involved the nation as well. So there was something considerably more serious about a priest sinning than anybody else. It says, "If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people." The words "according to the sin of the people" means he sins, and the people are involved accordingly in his sin.

Some of you are wearing watches. If your watch happens to be wrong, the only person that's going to be affected by it is you. Very few other people will be affected. But if the clock downtown in the center of the square is wrong, then everybody in the city who uses that clock is going to be wrong. That's the picture you have here, because the priest was who he was. He spoke for God. He was the representative to God. When he went wrong, it not only hurt himself, but it hurt a vast number of people as well. For that reason, you will see that the priest has to bring the most expensive of the offerings. His offering was far in excess of anybody else's, which is God's way of saying, "When the spiritual leader gets out of line, My punishment of him (My discipline upon him) will be multiplied of what it would be on anybody else."

One of the nice things that spiritual leaders always like is to find people criticizing them when they are wrong; slandering them; and, talking about them to other people when they're wrong. The reason spiritual leaders like that is because they know that their punishment is eased and placed on the criticizer and the slanderer. So if the person who is a spiritual leader gets out of line, if he can get folks criticizing and slandering, then part of his punishment is removed and put upon the slanderer. That passage says, "As you act, it shall be meted out to you." What would have gone primarily to the guilty spiritual leader is imposed upon the slanderer and the criticizer. So you want to remember that when you decide to take the matter into your own hands, and to straighten out spiritual leadership – that God will discipline, and He has made very specific warnings and provisions for that. You would do better not to get between God and His applying of the discipline, or you may get a slash across your own back.

He had to bring the most expensive type, which was a young bullock (a young ox). It had to be in perfect condition again. He had to bring this ox to the brazen altar; place his hand on the animal's head, indicating transfer of sin; and, then kill it. In this way, he was placing upon this animal what? He was saying, "There are things I have done wrong that I am not aware of, or maybe I am now aware of it, but when I sinned, it was unintentional, and I now place those unintentional sins upon the head of this young bullock. The blood was caught by the officiating priest in a basin and taken into the tabernacle. This blood represented (remember) the life of the sinless Jesus Christ.

**The Veil**

Now, in the tabernacle, there was this veil. The priest walked into the tabernacle through the entrance, and walked up to this veil. He had this blood in his hand; he put his finger into it; and, he sprinkled it seven times toward that veil. What's the significance of that?

**The Ark of the Covenant**

First of all, what's behind the veil? Well, behind the veil we have the Ark of the Covenant. In the Holy of Holies there was only one area of furniture. The Ark of the Covenant represented the meeting place with God. On top of the ark was a thing called the mercy seat, which was simply the lid of that box. We've gone over this before, so we won't go into detail. Over this, there was a glowing cloud of light, which was the Shekinah glory that represented the presence of God.

So here in the Holy of Holies was this tremendous illumination. There was one piece of furniture alone – this ark in which was contained the broken law (the two tables of the Law of Moses); the pot of manna representing Christ as the bread of life; and, the rod of Aaron budded, representing the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These were inside this box called the Ark of the Covenant. In this room, nobody came except the high priest once a year on the great day of Atonement, and then by a very orderly prescribed manner, so that he wouldn't be struck dead here when he came to make atonement for the sins of the people.

This veil hid all that from view, and it was toward this veil that the blood was sprinkled seven times because of what was behind it. This veil separated (you obviously can see) a holy God from unholy sinners. Well, Hebrews 10:19-20 give us the explanation of this veil. That's the first thing we have to understand. We'll spend a little more time on this one, because this is a very significant symbolism that will help you to understand again that what God was doing in this sin offering was not just forgetting something. We're going to show you again what it costs God every time you sin unintentionally.

Hebrews 10:19-20: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest (or the Holy of Holies) by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is His flesh." So this Scripture tells us that the body of Jesus Christ was represented by this heavy curtain. I've told you before that this curtain (when it was placed in the temple later, where this was expanded) was 60 feet high; it was 32 feet wide; and, it was 4 inches in thickness.

This curtain represented the sinless humanity of Jesus Christ on earth. The body of Christ on earth demonstrated, by His sinlessness, how separated he was from all the rest of humanity which was sinful. Now, Peter makes this very clear in Luke 5:8 when Jesus had that miraculous catch. He just looked at Him and said, "You are a sinless person." He fell down and said, "Depart from me, I'm a sinner. You're sinless." And we have there in that one incident what we are trying to demonstrate here. This veil (that is, the body of Jesus Christ) separated all human beings, one side from the other. Jesus is perfect humanity on one side, and everybody else is on the other side – the imperfect humanity.

Now, what God requires of everybody who will enter into heaven is to have the same kind of perfect humanity that Jesus Christ had. And nobody qualifies. So while He was on earth, Jesus Christ had a body that was sinless, but the body was a veil. It actually hid the glory of God. Only on certain occasions, like on the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17:1-2, was the veil removed so that people could see His glory. So the body of Jesus Christ really acted as a veil, even on earth, separating the view of the holiness of God from sinful humanity.

This veil obviously was standing in the way of a human being entering fellowship with the living God. For this reason, when Jesus Christ finally died on the cross, Matthew 27:50-51 tell us that suddenly in the temple, this curtain was torn from top to bottom, as if the finger of God reached up from heaven and slashed it in two, and the whole curtain flew apart. There, to the horror of the Jews, was exposed to public view the most sacred piece of furniture in the temple worship, and that was the Ark of the Covenant. What was God saying? Here where God communed with man was now open to everybody who wanted to come in. Because of what? Because we come through the veil which was the body of Christ symbolically. Through the body of Christ offered upon the cross in death, we enter into eternal life. He died spiritually, but He also had to die physically. It is his spiritual and physical death which is our pathway into the presence of the living God.

Now, when the priest comes in, and he sprinkles seven times against that veil, representing the body of Christ, he is speaking of eternal fellowship with this holy God based upon what? Based upon a sacrifice made in the person of Jesus Christ that makes it possible for worship to be maintained with a holy God.

So my unintentional sinning does not cause me to lose my salvation. That was provided through the sinless humanity of Jesus Christ. It does hinder my fellowship with God, which has been opened to me. So when he sprinkled against this veil, he was saying, "Temporal fellowship can be restored. My eternal relationship to God has been established by what Christ did on the cross, and I remind you by sprinkling this blood. But my temporal fellowship has been broken, and that's what I'm restoring.

**The Altar of Incense**

Then he did something else. He turned to another piece of furniture called the Altar of Incense. That was a very fantastic piece of furniture. It was higher than all the others. It was ... twice as high. It had horns. It was a place of great significance. After he got through sprinkling that curtain, he now turned to the altar of incense. There something very dramatic was done in terms of the sin offering.

Remember that all of this is a sin offering. All of this is God telling us something relative to the fact that, "I did something wrong, and, God, I didn't mean to do it." So what did God have to do? The first thing was that it had to be made clear that your access through the body of Christ into this place of eternal fellowship with God is secure. You haven't lost your salvation. But something else has to be established. That comes through this next altar, the altar of incense...

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

[**Back to the Advanced Bible Doctrine (Philippians) index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/philippiansdanish.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)