***The Sin Offering and the Trespass Offering - PH91-02
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 4:14-19***

Now we're going to try to tie up the Levitical offerings, and lay the final stages for the closing of Philippians. We have learned thus far that the Levitical burnt offering portrayed the work of Jesus Christ in redemption. We found that the Levitical meal offering, which was a bloodless offering, portrayed the sinless humanity of Jesus Christ in redemption. We found that the Levitical peace offering portrayed the reconciliation which has been provided by Jesus Christ, where sinners are reconciled to a righteous God. The Levitical sin offering, which we are currently looking at, was required for restoration to temporal fellowship after unintentional sinning.

So the first three offerings were not compulsory. The burnt offering; the meal offering; and, the peace offering were just something a person brought. This is where the expression comes from that you have heard, "Bringing tithes and offerings." Tithes, for example, were compulsory. You had to bring those. These other offerings you did not have to bring.

But there were two offerings, the sin offering and the trespass offering, which were compulsory. They was required.

**The Sin Offering**

We have seen that the sin offering had various procedures depending on who you were. So we pointed out last time that the priest was required to bring the most expensive offering of all. He had to bring a young bull ox called a bullock. It was the most expensive, and fittingly so, because as the priest, when he sinned, it affected the whole nation. Therefore, his stepping out of line was even more grievous than that of the ordinary common person, because he should have known better.

The animal was slain; its blood was taken into the Holy Place of the tabernacle; and, it was sprinkled seven times toward this veil which separated a holy God from a sinful human being. The veil represented the pathway to eternal fellowship with God. Regarding the sevenfold sprinkling, you will recognize that the number seven is the number of perfection in Scripture. The sevenfold sprinkling signified the perfect provision which the sacrifice on the brazen altar made for entering worship and fellowship with the living God.

So this veil represented Christ's body, and He is actually the pathway whereby we can come into the presence of this God. This sevenfold sprinkling on this veil indicated that unintentional sinning does not result in the loss of salvation. This has been provided through the sinless humanity of Christ which was demonstrated here on earth. It showed the difference between Himself and the rest of us. But this sprinkling toward the veil indicated that what was done, representing the death of Christ on the cross, provided a way into the very presence of God that could never be removed.

**The Altar of Incense**

Now, the second thing that was done was that the priest took that basin of blood and he smeared some of it on the four corners of the altar of incense. The altar of incense was called the altar of gold. It was made of acacia wood, which was a very hard desert wood that was impervious to destruction and to rotting. It was made of acacia wood, and then it was covered over with gold. It was one-and-a-half feet by one-and-a-half feet square..., and it was three feet in height. It was the tallest object of all the furniture in the tabernacle.

This box had a decorative crown that surrounded the top perimeter. Out of the four corners went four horns. Actually, the Bible doesn't tell us how many horns this altar of incense had, but we presume it had four, just as the brazen altar did. It simply says that the horns were to be attached.

The incense was burned on this altar, and that's all that was burned there. There was no other sacrifice placed upon this altar except incense. It was burned morning and evening. The way they did that was that there was a ... tool which the priest would take out and he would scoop up some of the hot coals off the brazen altar. Then he would walk in here and place that on top of this altar of incense. Then he would put on a specially prepared incense. The incense was made of four basic elements – four basic (really) gums of plants. We're not going to go into that. There's significance to that, but we're not interested in that much detail currently in this study. But this incense was specially prepared, and it was forbidden to duplicate it. It was forbidden under severe penalty for anybody to duplicate this incense. It was a unique representative incense of something that we shall see in a moment. This is what they burned. You can read about this in Exodus 37-38, "Morning and evening."

The altar of incense again represented the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The acacia wood represented His humanity; the gold represented His deity; the crown around the top represented His exaltation (Hebrews 2:7); and, the horns in Scripture stand for power. You may confirm this in Daniel 8:3-8 and Revelation 5:6.

**The High Priest**

So this altar represents the person of Jesus Christ, and particularly as the believer's High Priest in heaven. Hebrews 8:1 (as the book of Hebrews so regularly does) gives us insights on the meanings of these offerings and of these procedures. Hebrews 8:1 refers to Him in that way: "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: we have such a High Priest, Who is seated on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens." So Jesus Christ is represented as our High Priest in the form of this golden altar of incense. He is, in this capacity, the mediator between God and sinner. Thus, the altar stood in front of this veil between sinful man and the Holy God. In 1 Timothy 2:5, He is referred to, under that guise, of being the One Mediator.

**The Intercessor**

He is also the intercessor in heaven, the Bible tells us, who is praying now for the saints. Hebrews 7:25 and Romans 8:35 both refer to the fact of His work in being our intercessor. This is a very great comfort. This altar stood there, and the incense, as we shall see in a moment, rising up represented prayers. Here our high priest was sending up prayers in our behalf before the living God. I don't know how that makes you feel, but it's a sense of great relief to me to know that Jesus Christ is constantly sitting up in heaven, praying for me personally and individually. Therefore, there's a great deal that you and I are preserved from. There's a lot of trouble we don't get into. There's a lot of mischief we don't get into simply because Jesus Christ prays for us. That's what it means for Him to be our intercessor.

Furthermore, He is our defender advocate in heaven, where He is defending us against Satan's constant attacks. Revelation tells how Satan, morning and night, is accusing us of wrongdoing. 1 John 2:1 adds to this the fact that Jesus Christ is our advocate. The word "advocate" means "lawyer." That is, when Satan accuses us of being undeserving of eternal life, Jesus Christ, our intercessor, now our advocate defender, expresses our case on the basis of His death, and God pronounces us not guilty.

This altar, therefore, represented Jesus Christ as our High Priest, talking to God in our behalf. That's what all the smoke represents. It's going up in incense. It is Christ talking to God as our intercessor and as our advocate. This indicates the eternal security of the believer in salvation. That's exactly what an expression in Hebrews 7:25 is referring to. It's referring to the security of the believer because of the intercession and advocacy of our High Priest: "Wherefore He (Jesus) is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them." This phrase "to the uttermost" is a technical phrase which means "always." He is able to save them always.

You'll notice that the verse indicates that being saved is the work of Jesus Christ. But it also indicates that staying saved is the work of Jesus Christ. The security of salvation is the work of Jesus Christ. When you suggest that it's possible for you to be saved today and lost tomorrow, just remember that the Bible says Jesus Christ is in heaven as our intercessor (interceding) and as our defender against any attacks of Satan relative to our salvation. Anytime anybody says you can be saved today and lost again tomorrow, you are saying that Jesus Christ is a failure in his work of intercession. No priest would have dared entertain such a thought as he ministered here before the altar of incense, knowing that what he was doing there was significant to God, and it represented something that was extremely precious to God, and something upon which God stood in an eternal way. It had eternal significance.

**Incense**

So what does the incense mean? Well, we get a clue, first of all, in Psalm 141:2 which says, "Let my prayer be set forth before you as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." Coming to the New Testament, we have prayers and incense again related. Revelation 5:8: "When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the lamb, having every one of them harps and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." So there again, we have a very definitive statement that incense represents in Scripture the prayers of believers.

Revelation 8:3-4: "And another angel came and stood at the altar having a golden censer, and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." Here the image of this altar of incense is transferred into heaven, and here again, the same picture is being portrayed. "And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." So the incense burned on this golden altar pictures the prayers of believers to God via Jesus Christ. These prayers are heard not because of who we are, but because of who and what Jesus Christ is.

Of course, such prayers would include the idea of praise and worship. So in another respect, this altar of incense, the golden altar, was also the place of worship. Hebrews 13:15 says, "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." There is one of the sacrifices of the church age, and we will be referring to that another time. But here it is connected with this altar of incense; that is, praise.

**Horns**

So this particular altar is representing Jesus Christ, our High Priest, as the intercessor and the communicator with God in our behalf. It is the horns of this altar which were smeared with the blood of the animal that had been slain. And remember that we're still talking about what is done on behalf of the priest of the nation. The animal's blood is sacrificed here; sprinkled seven times against the veil; and, now smeared on the horns of the altar of incense. The significance of that was to declare forgiveness for sins relative to temporal fellowship. That's what the altar of incense was. It was a place of fellowship. It was a place where you could pray to God. It was a place where you could communicate with God. It was a place where God would respond to what you had to say. That can only be done for the Christian who is in fellowship with God.

So the blood smeared on the horns declared that forgiveness for sins in order to bring you into temporal fellowship again was based on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, which was performed out at the brazen altar. The blood that was shed here was the blood that enabled you also to come into temporal fellowship. So that pictured (before anybody understood what it was saying) the fact that when Christ died upon the cross, He took care of all of your future sins as well as those that you had been guilty of to up to the point of salvation. Thus, the sins after salvation are also paid for. Thus, God can restore you in perfect holiness to temporal fellowship.

Then there was a third step, and that was to walk back out with the rest of the blood that was in that basin, and to pour it out at the foot of the brazen altar – to pour it out on the ground. The brazen altar, remember, represented the cross of Jesus Christ where He made atonement for sins. Here is where God was propitiated. The basis of salvation is the physical and the spiritual deaths of Jesus Christ on the cross. This was represented by the animal's blood. The basis of eternal security of our salvation is this blood which is shed at this altar or at the foot of this cross. The basis of our restoration to temporal fellowship is also this same blood which was shed upon that cross.

So we have in 1 John 1:7, the reference to this ground of the blood: "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin." The word "all sin" is expressed in a little different phrase in verse 9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. So "all sin" means what we know and what we don't know, as "all unrighteousness" specifically applies to what we do not know. It is the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son. That blood represents His spiritual and physical deaths, giving His life (His blood represented His life of the sinless humanity that we saw in the meal offering), given in behalf of our sins that cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

So this blood was poured out at the foot of the brazen altar because this altar represented the cross to come. This altar, incidentally, was seven-and-a-half feet by seven-and-a-half feet by four-and-a-half feet in height. It had a grill halfway down. This grill was the place that the animals were actually burned in the sacrifice. This altar was made of acacia wood, and it was covered with what the Bible translators called "brass." Actually, it was a copper and tin alloy. It had four horns at the corners of the altar, and those four horns went upward and outward toward the four points of the compass, speaking of the fact that the salvation that was provided here was for the whole world.

The fire on this altar originally came directly from heaven. Leviticus 9:24 and Leviticus 6:12-13 will tell you about that. When they were ready to begin the first burnt offering, it came down directly from heaven, and it was to be kept burning continually with wood thereafter. You notice it is in the courtyard of the tabernacle, and it is the first thing you must approach before anything else, and certainly the very presence of God in the Holy of Holies.

On this altar, in behalf of the priest for this sin offering, the fat and the kidneys of the bullock were burned, just as in the peace offering. But this time something was different. The rest of the bullock (his skin; his carcass; and, the whole bit) was taken outside of the whole Israelite camp. This was the tabernacle. On the four sides were set up the tents in which the people of Israel lived as they were in the wilderness when they were at a stopping point.

The rest of the animal was taken out beyond that encampment round about the tabernacle, and the carcass was taken to an ash pile. This was a place which was clean because there was no ceremonial defilement there. Here, Jesus Christ was pictured as being made sin for all mankind. The carcass of this bullock (and all the rest of him – the innards, and the whole bit) was burned outside the city.

Again, we go back to the book of Hebrews, that tremendous explainer of the significance of these symbols. Hebrews 13:11-13 line up the meaning of taking the carcass outside the camp, and the reality in what happened to Jesus Christ: "For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin are burned outside the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach." So this portrayed sin's destructiveness in the fact that it burned the rest of the animal outside the camp. It was a place of bearing sin, and, therefore, a place of coming under the judgment of God.

God was propitiated not by the good life of Jesus Christ, but by what He did while hanging on the cross. Leviticus 4:13-21 tell we what the sacrifice was, relative to the sin offering for the whole congregation. When the people as a whole sinned, they had to come back to temporal fellowship. It follows the same basic procedure as with the sinning priest. It didn't matter really whether the priest sinned or whether the people sinned. It was, in effect, the same thing because the priest so represented the nation before God. But both cases had to bring the bullock. In this case, the elders of the congregation lay their hands on the bullock to transfer sin. Then one very interesting thing is verse 20. They are distinctly promised forgiveness or restoration to temporal fellowship after unintentional sinning as a people: "And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for the sin offering. So shall he do with this. The priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them;" that is, the thing of which they were guilty.

Verses 22-26 give the use of the sin offering for a ruler, and we won't go through the details. Basically, they're again the same, except this time he has to bring an unblemished male goat to the brazen altar. He lays his hand on the goat symbolically to transfer his guilt as a ruler to the animal, and he kills it. The officiating priest catches the blood, and this time he only smears it on the horns of the burnt offering. He does not enter into the tabernacle itself with the blood. He pours the remainder of the blood at the foot of the altar, as Christ's blood was poured at the foot of His cross. The fat is burned on the altar. Temporal fellowship is restored. Then the priests eat the flesh of the goat after the meat has been boiled. They eat it in the courtyard of the tabernacle. You may read about that in Leviticus 6:24-29.

Then the last kind of the sin offering (restoration to temporal fellowship when you didn't know you sinned) was for what the Bible calls the common people (verses 27-35). This was basically the same as for the rulers. However, the offering this time was a female goat or a lamb, which (in the female form) represented the receptiveness of the Messiah when it came to bearing the sins of the world. Jesus Christ was willing to do that.

**The Trespass Offering**

Now let's look at the final offering of the Levitical system, and that is the trespass offering. This is in Leviticus 5 and also Leviticus 6:1-7. Again, this was a compulsory offering, but it was a non-fragrant offering. The sin offering was for sins that you didn't know you had committed, but it was also non-fragrant because sin was not a fragrant aroma to God. This was also a non-fragrant offering, but it was a little different because this was restoration to temporal fellowship after you knew you had sinned.

It also had another variation. You might sometimes say, "It seemed like a good thing to do at the time," then you discover that what you did at the time had some consequences that were evil. Now you've discovered that a deliberate move of yours, which you thought was a good idea at the time, resulted in sinful repercussions farther down the line. Now you're in the category of having willfully sinned, because God says, "You're responsible for your decisions and their consequences. You're not just responsible for whether you did a thing, and whether it was right or wrong. You are responsible for the consequences. I think you'll see that in a moment.

So here, willful sin means, "I'm going to do it. I know it's wrong. Or I make a decision, and then discover, as the result of my exercise of my volition in this respect, that what I did ended up in evil." There were various ways in which you could be guilty of a trespass. We won't read these in detail, but verse 1 says you could be guilty of a trespass by refusing to bear true witness to what you know of a crime. This is the case where you know that somebody did something wrong, and you're called upon to bear witness, and you refuse to bear the truth in the form of a witness. That is one way of being guilty of a trespass. What does that mean? Well, it means you deliberately are withholding information.

Or you may be guilty of a trespass by touching what is ceremonially unclean. Leviticus 5:2-3 refer to that. The significance of this is that, again, the Jews were held responsible for what they associated with. That is a very significant point, because God also holds us responsible for what and who we associate with. It symbolized the effects of the believer's association with evil – the effects upon himself. The human viewpoint ideas or the evil companions are unclean to a regenerated person. Therefore, you must be careful in associating with human viewpoint people. You must be careful in associating with people who are prone and inclined to practice evil. If you associate with them, you will sooner or later be contaminated by their evil.

You may find yourself actively serving the Lord in some capacity, and producing divine good works. Then suddenly you can be shot down by becoming part of someone else's carnality – pulling someone else's evil chestnuts out of the fire, so to speak. This particular phase of the trespass offering was warning the Jews not to associate themselves with what could contaminate them either ceremonially or with actual moral guilt.

Also, a person could trespass by vowing to do something before God, and then deliberately refusing to do it (verse 4). This is why it is very dangerous for you to be making promises to God. I remember when I was a student at Dallas Seminary, I used to hear Dr. J. Vernon McGee, the former pastor of the Church of the Open Door in Los Angeles, California, warning us, as students in the seminary, to be very careful about making vows with God. It was his position that if you promised to do something, you had to be very careful about what you did with it afterwards because you were talking to God.

Fortunately, in the age of grace, it's not quite as bad as it was in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, making a vow and then not keeping it got you in a peck of trouble. The grace of God now overlooks and enables us to find our way back out of that kind of foolishness. But nevertheless, it is dangerous; it is ill-advised; and, it is foolhardy to be making promises to God, especially under some inspirational moment.

One of the wisest pieces of information I ever got out of a senior elderly man in the church that I grew up in, in the city of Chicago, was never to make any decisions when I'm emotionally upset – never make any decisions when I cannot permit God to be speaking to me. When we are not in the position of peace, then we are not in the position of listening to God.

So be careful about doing something under the inspiration of the moment for some reason. I don't mean this is doing a bad thing. I mean a good thing. Here's a tremendous sermon on material stewardship. What do you do? You say, "God, I'm going to give you $1,000 every week from now on." You make $600 a week. Now, that really is faith resting. But somebody has so moved you that you're going to do something. Now what are you going to do? We treat God with contempt when we do things like that. It could be a very good thing we intend to do. But here, the trespass offering said, "This will knock you right out of temporal fellowship." God says, "I view this as a deliberate sin on your part when you say you're going to do something and you don't do it. All of this was known to the Jews.

What were they to do with it? I want to read Leviticus 5:5-6: "And it shall be when he shall be guilty in one of these things (these that we've reviewed here – that these previous verses touch on), that he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing. And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord for his sin which he has sinned: a female from the flock; a lamb; or, a kid of the goats for a sin offering. The priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin." You notice that what he was required to do was just what we are required to. He was to go to God and say, "I confess. I was wrong. I did this. And I trespassed against You."

However, he had to do something else. Not only did he have to make that confession. And again, the confession you notice was to God – "Against You and You only have I sinned." But there was something else. He had to bring a sacrifice. That's this trespass offering that we're talking about. Again, it is for various categories. Verse 6 talks about the average sinner. The average income person had to bring a female lamb or a female goat. The lamb pictured payment for the sin of another. It pictured payment. The lamb pictured one paying for the sin of another. The goat pictures bearing the sin of another. The goat is always viewed as the sin bear. The lamb is viewed as the sin payer. It's really two sides of the same thing, but they're viewed from a little different angles.

If you were a poorer Jew, verses 7-10 say that you could bring two turtle doves or two pigeons for a sin offering and for a burnt offering: one bird for a sin offering; and, one bird for a burnt offering. You'll notice that we're talking about trespasses (known deliberate sins), and in this particular place, one of the birds is used for a sin offering; that is, to cover what one didn't know. But the other is used as a burnt offering to remind us that that thing that we have done unknowingly or knowingly is based upon what's done out on the altar of sacrifice. So in this case, you have a sin offering for unknown sins, and a burnt offering as the basis of all forgiveness for eternal and temporal fellowship.

In other words, you really can't separate any of these offerings. You can't separate what happens out on this brazen altar. You can't separate what happens up at the place of fellowship at the altar of incense for restoration to fellowship. It's all tied together under the same provision of the person of Jesus Christ.

The poorest of all Jews were allowed to bring a bushel of fine flour to which there was no oil or frankincense added. We have this in verses 11-13. There was no oil because there was to be no Holy Spirit represented. There was no frankincense because there is no sweet savor aroma to God in this offering. But it is brought to the priest as a sin offering. He burns a handful again on this brazen altar as a memorial to the Messiah, and the sinner is forgiven. When he is forgiven here, he is also forgiven relative to that deliberate sin that he made. That is the basis of the forgiveness on the basis of his confession. His confession is the first step of his forgiveness. Then there are various kinds of offerings as per your economic status that is accompanying that confession.

**Special Sins**

Before we tie this up, we should look in Leviticus 5 at some very special sins. Here is a case that we read of, first of all, about sin against God's holy things in verses 14-16. We read about sins of ignorance against the holy things that belong to God: "If a soul commits a trespass, and sin through ignorance in the holy things of the Lord, then he shall bring for his trespass unto the Lord a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with your valuation by shekels of silver (that is, of how much that ram is worth) after the shackles of the sanctuary (as per the sanctuary coinage) for a trespass offering. He shall make amends for the harm that he has done in the holy thing. And he shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest (the priest gets the 20% addition). And the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering. And it shall be forgiven him."

Here is a special case of trespassing against God. Here is something that belongs to God that you have taken from God. For example, you start worshiping idols, and so the worship that belongs to God you take away from Him. Or you rob Him as a Jew. (You can't do this as a Christian.) But as a Jew, you could rob Him of your tithes – that religious income tax that you were obligated to bring. So you don't bring it. You rob God. Or the feast days come along (these special feast days and their accompanying sacrifices), and you ignore them, and you don't bring them. All of this puts you under divine condemnation. Now, what are you going to do about it?

Well, robbing God is covered by bringing a trespass offering of a perfect ram. The perfect ram has to be worth more than one shekel. It must be worth at least 2 shekels in value, as per the temple and the tabernacle coinage. But then after the priest says, "Well, this ram is worth $50," then the person who brings this animal for restitution also has to add 20%. He has to give $10 to the priest, which goes to the priest. So he's brought a ram, and he's brought the restitution to the priest as compensation for the fraud that he perpetrated in taking something that belonged to God. So he's got a $60 trip to the brazen altar.

The ram represented Jesus Christ as the sinner's substitute, of course. What did the added money represent? It added the grace of God. Do you know what grace means? Grace means you always get more than you deserve. Here the grace of God brought God more by bringing the priest more. The priest not only got the ram, and what parts under certain conditions he would eat, but he also got this restitution, this additional penalty of the 20% of the $10. This passage indicates to us that we are always responsible for our actions. Trespasses are viewed as willful, deliberate things that we do. We exercise our volition.

Notice Leviticus 5:17: "If a soul sins and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord, though he knew it not, yet he is guilty, and shall bear his iniquity: "I did this, but it resulted in this sin over here, and I didn't realize that. If I had known it was going to do this, I'd have never done it." How many times have you said, "If I'd have known what the consequences were going to be of this act, I'd have never done it?" The Bible says, "That's OK. That's exactly what's going to happen to you when your brains are scrambled and you're not thinking straight. The Lord isn't leading. The Lord isn't sounding through to you." He says, "But you're still responsible for the consequences."

Verse 18: "And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock with your valuation." The priest says here's what it's worth. The rams is worth $50, or whatever. "For a trespass offering unto the priest. The priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance, where he erred and knew it not. It shall be forgiven him. The consequences are forgiven. It is a trespass offering for you. It is certainly a trespass against the Lord. You notice again that re-occurring principle: "Against You, and you only, have I sinned." It is sin against the Lord.

The trespass offering stresses the injury side. Did you notice that? The trespass offering wants to stress the injury. What did the sin offering stress? The sin offering stressed the guilt. That's why neither one of these are sweet savors to the Father – neither the guilt nor the sin offering, nor the fact of the responsibility (the injury done by the willful sinning of the trespass offering). You were guilty even if you were not anticipating the consequences. So he atones with the ram and the trespass offering. You are responsible for what you do.

This is continued in Leviticus 6 where we have this principle of restitution very clearly laid out. When you sin knowingly against God, for example, by defrauding another person of his possessions, that's a certain type of sin. We have this described in Leviticus 6:2-3. You're defrauding a person of his possession. Then it lists several ways you could do that. You could tell a person that had left something with you for safekeeping, "I lost it. It's gone." You lied to him. He has given you something of value to keep for him, perhaps while he's been gone on a journey. You say, "I'm sorry, I don't have it. It's lost. Somebody stole it. It's gone." ...

It says that another way you can do this is by robbing a person of his property. You might steal a man's well. That was fantastic in this culture. Or you steal some of his cattle, or you steal a piece of his land in some way. Another way that these two verses describe as sinning by defrauding another person is by making a person an offer he can't afford to refuse. So you extort something from him. Or it says you may deny under oath what you found that belonged to another. You find something. It belongs to somebody else. Somebody else comes along and says, "Did you find my motorcycle?" And you say, "No." He says, "Well, I thought I parked it in front of your house. You didn't find it?" You say, "Honest to God, I didn't find it." And it says that you take an oath, and you compound the fraud.

So what's God going to do to a person who is doing that to people's material possessions? You're defrauding people of their material possessions. Well, the guilty party, first of all, has to return what he took from the other person illegally. Verse 4: "Then it shall be because he has sinned and he's guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he has deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered to him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he has sworn falsely. He shall even restore it in the principal." Point number one is that you return what you took in a wrong way.

Then again, the principle of the fifth comes into play in the form of divine reparations. This is not only restitution of what you took, but reparations to the tune of 20% is added: "And shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it to him to whom it appertains in the day of his trespass offering." So here's what we're talking about. You steal something for $100. God says the first thing you do is you return that $100 to the man. Then you add a fifth. You add $20. What you actually give that person that you stole from in return is $120. Until you give him that $120, you cannot return to temporal fellowship with the living God.

But that's not the end of the story. The trespass offerings require confession. Then you have to bring the offering. You brought the ram. The ram costs $50 dollars. Then you have to give the priest another 20%. That costs you another $10. So before you're through with it, you've got yourself a $180 bill because of your shenanigans. That is just to get back into temporal fellowship. How do you like those bananas? Where would we go if every time we got out of temporal fellowship today by this kind of fraudulent action that it cost us $180 to get back in? It certainly would help us to behave a lot more. The Jews got hit like this because God disciplined. He kept secret about what he had fraudulently gotten, but in time, the hand of the Lord became so heavy that he said, "Forget it. I'm going to pay it, and I'm going to get out from under the hand of God." So the guilty person, after making his confession by restoring what he took and adding 20%, is brought back into temporal fellowship.

So the trespass offering spoke of sin committed in such a way that it was non-fragrant aroma to God. But notice that this reparation has about it the quality of grace. What does grace do? Grace always gives you more than you deserve. Under this system, look what happened. God received something. What did He get? He got the individual Jewish believer back in fellowship with Himself, so now He was an instrument in His hand again to be used in His service. The victim, who had been defrauded, regained his property plus 20% in reparations. So grace had done more for him. The priest who performed the services of the trespass offering received 20% value that had been placed upon whatever it was. So he came out on the end of grace again. He came out with more because of this grace function. Finally, the wrongdoer himself was, after all, now forgiven. He was back in temporal fellowship. He was out from under the chastening hand of God, and he was back in happiness.

So the trespass offering teaches us some significant things. It teaches us that we are responsible for our sins. It teaches us that we are wise to leave vengeance with God. You may be a Christian who's going along great in fellowship with the Father. You're active, and you're productive in Christian service. Then you think somebody has wronged you. Maybe they have, and maybe they haven't. Or you think someone's out of line that you're going to straighten out. You're going to about this in two ways in either case.

One may be by the route of vengeance. You retaliate to the person who struck out at you. Pretty soon you're down at their level of meanness; their level of crudity; and, their level of attacking. So you get yourself into a good old sin nature orgy: snarling; snapping; sniping; and, going exactly nowhere but deeper into carnality and out of temporal fellowship. So the result is that you have joined your oppressor out of fellowship, and the end of the line of your divine good production has come. Wasn't that stupid?

But on the other hand, the trespass offering tells us that we may respond on the principle of 1 Peter 5:7, which tells us that we are to cast all our cares upon Him. So when an abuser is distressing us, we cast him upon the Lord.

We may respond with Romans 12:19, which tells us to leave vengeance with the Lord. So we walk away. We have no anger, and we don't get upset. We just leave it with the Lord to get things straightened out.

Colossians 3:13 gives us another principle, and that is that we forgive as Jesus Christ forgives. No matter what is done, forgiveness is there. We have no delusions upon ourselves. We don't think we're better than other people. We don't try to straighten out the whole world. The person may be wrong, but we forgive and we go on.

Finally, we follow the principle of Philippians 3:13 that says that we forget it. We do not remember. But we go on with the Lord. Consequently, this is the path that the trespass offering reflects. You leave it with the Lord who imposes the discipline until the thing has been returned and a percentage added to it. You leave it with the Lord, and the principle of 20% reparation is added to your benefit and to your reward in heaven. And God blesses you, and you go right on operating with Him.

So this trespass offering, while it is not a fragrant aroma to God, is an offering that is fantastic in the things that it teaches us, particularly this side of the cross where we can look back and see what it meant to God all the time that it was being performed.

Next time we want to tie this together into the significance back to Philippians concerning the sacrifices that we are to bring. After all, you're not going to bring any rams and lambs and bullocks, but you do have sacrifices to bring which are just as important to God; just as much of a fragrant aroma to God; and, just as great a loss if you do not perform your priesthood. So we're going to look at the Christian's priesthood; at the significance of that priesthood in its operational form; and, at the sacrifices that we are to bring.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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