

OLD TESTAMENT 1

UNIT SEVEN

THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM

SACRIFICE AND THE COVENANT

- Old Testament sacrifices take place within the covenant.
- They do not establish a relationship with God, but are based on a relationship already established.

- **STAGES OF SACRIFICIAL RITUAL:**
 - The worshipper drew near with the offering.
 - The worshipper laid hands on the victim's head.
 - The worshipper slew the animal.
 - The priest put the blood of the victim on the altar.
 - The flesh of the victim was burnt on the altar of burnt offering.
 - In most cases, the flesh was eaten.

➤ THE SACRIFICES:

- made it possible to maintain the covenant.
- established the seriousness of sin.
- brought about atonement.
- suggested the idea of substitution.

THE MEANING OF THE SYSTEM

➤ 'MAKE ATONEMENT'

- Atonement is expressed by the Hebrew verb 'kipper'.

➤ THE ORDER OF THE SACRIFICES

- LEVITICUS 1:1-6:7 - Teaching
 - Burnt Offering
 - Grain or Cereal Offering
 - Fellowship or Peace Offering
 - Sin Offering
 - Guilt Offering
- LEVITICUS 6:8-7:38 – Instruction, administration and disposal of the victim.
 - Burnt Offering
 - Grain Offering
 - Sin Offering
 - Fellowship Offering
- LEVITICUS 9 - Actual Operation of the System
 - Sin Offering
 - Burnt Offering for Aaron and the people
 - Fellowship Offerings

➤ THE OPERATION OF THE SYSTEM SUGGESTS:

- PROPITIATION: Sin is firstly dealt with.
- CONSECRATION: Burnt offering symbolises whole-hearted devotion to God.
- FELLOWSHIP: Peace offerings show the re-establishment of relationships with God.
- Meaning of Sacrifice: cleansing within the established covenant relationship and constant renewal of personal dedication to God.

THE PRIESTHOOD

- The function was to teach the law, administer justice and offer sacrifice.
- The tribe of Levi was set apart to minister to Israel.
- From the time of Moses, priests also had to be from the family of Aaron ('Aaronic Levites').
- David eventually divided the priesthood into 24 courses.

FESTIVALS

Name	Celebrating	Type	Later linked with:
Passover	Commemorating the Exodus	Thanksgiving	-
First Fruits (Feast of Weeks)	Beginning of Harvest	Thanksgiving	Giving of Law at Sinai
Tabernacles (In-Gathering)	End of Agricultural Year	Thanksgiving	Desert Sojourn
Day of Atonement	Collective Guilt	Atonement	-

THE SANCTUARY

- The temple would eventually represent the earthly palace of Israel's heavenly king.
- Worship in the temple was associated with entry into the royal presence.
- The tabernacle in the wilderness had the same idea.
- Both were visible representations of God's presence with his people.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SYSTEM

- Sacrifice in the Old Testament is presented as the means of forgiveness within the covenant.
- The sacrifice did not take away the sin – only God's forgiveness, mediated through the system, did that.
- We now know that the system looked ahead to the sacrifice of Jesus.
- Old Testament worshippers did not know that.