

What Were The Sacrifices?

What do the sacrifices represent? Why is so much of the Bible devoted to such a boring, unimportant topic? Most people start reading a few pages into Leviticus, and their eyes start to gloss over, and they drift; they either stop reading the Bible altogether or fast-forward to some of the more interesting parts. I know, that's what I used to do.

But as I read the Bible through a few times, without fast-forwarding, I appreciated them more. Well, really I didn't – they were still boring, repetitive, and tedious. But I did start to understand that there was more here than a bunch of stale rules for a long-dead priesthood system. These things were symbols. Symbols of the future, of the past, visualizations of pieces in the plan of God. Paul plainly said so when he said

Hebrews 8:4-5 *For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.*

The gifts – sacrifices – that were offered by the priests according to the Levitical law were examples and shadows of heavenly things, as were the priests themselves. So when something is described in the temple, or some sacrifice is offered, it has a *direct* – not merely symbolic, but *direct* – reference to something in heaven.

I stress that point because most people who explain the sacrifices say something like this: “And this goat sacrifice represented Christ; and the blood poured out represented the blood of Christ. And the fat that was burned represents the blessings of Christ, and the altar it was killed on represented Christ's love, and the knife that was used represents Christ's spirit, and the priest – well, obviously the priest represents Christ!”

First, Jesus is not the center of the universe. If there is one, it is the Father, not Christ. Second, every action anyone ever performed in past or future eternity does not represent Christ. Third, **Jesus' sacrifice is not the only one in history!**

Romans 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

OUR bodies – not Christ’s, or Christ in us – but OUR BODIES are a living sacrifice. This proves that every sacrifice is not about Christ, and therefore that some of the Levitical sacrifices *might* be about something, or someone, besides Christ! These are shadows of heavenly THINGS, not all shadows of the SAME *EVENT that took place... on Earth!!*

...But what exactly they DO represent, you will start to uncover in...

LESSON 58: WHAT WERE THE SACRIFICES?

In the Garden of Eden there were no sacrifices... until someone sinned. Does God want sacrifices? **Psalms 40:6**. Does God need sacrifices? **Psalms 50:7-13**. What are sacrifices for? **Hebrews 9:22**. So blood is required to pay for sins; but can animal blood do that? **Hebrews 10:4**. So what *exactly* did the blood of bulls and goats purify? **Hebrews 9:23**.

The blood of bulls and goats *symbolically* purified the PATTERNS – the shadows – of the heavenly things. But Paul concluded it logically follows that the heavenly things themselves must be purified with BETTER sacrifices. The goats were good enough to purify the shadows, but clearly not good enough for the original things themselves.

Paul continues in **Hebrews 9:24-28** to show that Christ entered into the *true* holy place, the one in heaven, to *offer Himself*. So in this role, He was both the high priest AND the sacrifice. But not *every sacrifice!* This verse is specifically referring to ONE sacrifice (**verse 26**), which directly corresponds to ONE event that was performed yearly by the OC High Priest, the atonement sacrifice described in **Leviticus 16**.

When the Priest in the OC went into the holy of holies and anointed the mercy seat with blood, it *directly* corresponds to Jesus going to the REAL mercy seat in heaven and doing the same thing; if the OC priest sprinkled the blood seven times in front of the mercy seat, then that symbolizes Jesus doing the same thing in heaven. Which in turn means something significant to the larger plan of God, but we’ll come back to that later.

The point is, by comparing **Leviticus 16** to **Hebrews 9-10** we can be certain of one thing: that **Leviticus 16** was a sort of allegorical play, a pageant God made Israel enact each year to foretell the future. To convey details about the plan of God He wasn’t ready to just come out and tell them. In this way, you could say that the book of Leviticus is a little bit like George Orwell’s book “Animal Farm”.

In that book, George Orwell cast various political leaders and groups, mostly communists, as various farm animals such as pigs, goats, and chickens; the story makes very little sense until you understand WHO the pigs represent, and WHO the horses represent. But once you understand the symbols, it conveys a very clear message.

Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers are the same way. They look boring and irrelevant; and to understand what God is trying to say, you have to understand the characters in the book. The high priest – initially, Aaron – is Jesus, this is clearly stated a dozen times (**Hebrews 6:20**, for instance). But who are Aaron’s sons? Are they also Jesus? Who is Moses? Or Miriam? Who are the people, or the rulers over the people, or the lower-ranking priests?

To return to our Animal Farm metaphor, each animal in the book has a specific person or ideological group in mind; if someone said, “Oh, the pigs represent the communists; the horse also represents the communists; the human farm owner also represents the communists and...” – what would be the point? Why have different characters at all, if they’re really all the same character??

It would confuse things even *more* if you said, “Napoleon (one of the pigs in Animal Farm) represents Stalin; Snowball also represents Stalin. The hard-working horse represents Stalin, and so does the donkey, the goats, the barn, the house, the windmill... all of these *obviously* represent Stalin!”

And yet this is EXACTLY what every person who tries to understand the symbolism of the temple or the sacrifices does – they find Christ in every sacrifice, every knife, every bowl, every window of the temple, and that’s just plain stupid. **God used different things because they represented different things.**

Obviously, I’m not saying God must do things the way George Orwell does (*shudder*), but God plainly said the entire Levitical system was an allegorical representation of the things in heaven; and by extension, an allegorical representation of the plan of God in general. So there must be a REASON God wanted different types of animals sacrificed in different ways at different times!

If God had wanted everything to represent Christ, He would have just made a big statue of Jesus in the middle of the temple complex and told people to worship it... ah-hah! Do you get it? *That’s exactly what these people are trying to do – make all these items in the temple **IDOLS of Jesus!***

By putting Him at the center of everything, and ignoring all the symbolism God went to great lengths to portray, they are trying to avoid hearing what God is *really* saying! Instead of *listening*, they hope to simply adore and worship Jesus instead of *doing what He said, and learning what He had to teach!* (**Matthew 7:21-27**, etc.).

UNLOCKING THE CHARACTERS

God’s metaphors are consistent. If He says “star means angel”, then it *always does*. It may have a deeper meaning as well, but it *always* means something recognizably connected to the original meaning. This makes our job a lot easier, because it means all we really have to do is firmly identify a few of the key characters in the OC sacrificial system, and the rest will unfold automatically.

Once we do that, we can simply compare how they are portrayed in the pageantry of Leviticus with what we know of the plan of God, and start making bridges – just like we do to understand prophecy. So we know that Aaron in particular, or any high priest in general, represents Jesus. This is a solid metaphor the Bible confirms many times.

But Aaron had sons, broadly referred to as Aaron’s household. Who are they? **Matthew 10:25**. Jesus implicitly called the disciples part of his house. **Hebrews 3:6** and **Ephesians 2:19** stated it explicitly. Are the saints to be part of the priesthood? **Revelation 20:6**. Specifically to the high-ranking priesthood? **1 Peter 2:9**. **Exodus 19:5-6** shows that this was God’s plan for all of Israel, until they rejected him and chose the OC.

So we disciples of Jesus who hope to be part of the firstborn *sons of God* are analogous to the “sons of Aaron”, for we are part of the house of Jesus. And that is why **Leviticus 16:6** shows that before Aaron could sacrifice to purify the rest of Israel, he first had to sacrifice for *himself and his household!*

In other words, Jesus had to sacrifice for Himself and His household – the saints – before He could purify the rest of Israel – the second-resurrection harvest!

LEVITICUS 16

We know that the passover sacrifice is specifically about Jesus’ death (**1 Corinthians 5:7**). But does that mean ALL the sacrifices are about Jesus’ death? In **Hebrews 9:25**, Paul connects Jesus’ sacrifice of Himself to the goat killed at the atonement sacrifice... but only one of the goats!

Read **Leviticus 16** all the way through. This is a pivotal chapter because it’s one of the few that can be (almost) completely explained with my current understanding. You’ll notice that God sets specific rules for when and how often Aaron – representing Jesus – was to enter the holy place. Also, there were five animals offered that day, four of which were killed; was Jesus all five? If so, why? How many times do you need to represent Jesus in the same symbol?

God commanded Aaron to bring a bullock and a ram for himself, and two goats and another ram for the people. The bull was sacrificed for Aaron *and his household*, then one goat was sacrificed for the Lord, and one was the scapegoat. Then at the very end, both rams were sacrificed as a burnt offering.

Start by looking at what was done with the Lord’s goat; he was sacrificed for the sins of the people, and his blood was brought inside of the temple and spread about the holy place, the most holy place, and the altars and censers – compare to **Hebrews 9:12**. So there can be no argument that this goat is Jesus. We went through all this in Lesson 16, but we are going somewhere new this time.

The other goat was not killed, and was sent alive into the wilderness. Banished, presumably eventually to die. Can you see the parallel to the man without a wedding garment in **Matthew 22:11-13**? Or the prince of this world being *cast out*? **John 12:31**. Or the bottomless pit that Satan is cast into during the millennium? **Revelation 20:1-3**.

Nothing that happens to this other goat in any way pictures Christ. It pictures the division that came between Jesus and Lucifer when Lucifer rebelled and became Satan. Because two cannot walk together unless they are agreed (**Amos 3:3**), and so when Lucifer no longer agreed with Jesus – that is, when iniquity was found in him (**Ezekiel 28:15**) – the two goats had to be separated, each divided to their separate destinies.

But what I want you to notice is the “zoom” on this metaphor. The passover represents events that took place over a 24 hour period. There is some larger scale symbolism as well, but the focus is just that one *day’s* worth of symbolism. But the atonement sacrifice encompasses a period of thousands of *years!*

The symbolism goes back to the original sin of Satan before the creation of the world, encompasses the death of Jesus, the purification of the heavenly temple after His resurrection, and then moves forward into what is still in OUR future! For **Leviticus 16:15-16** talks about the reconciliation of Israel (compare to **2 Corinthians 5:18-20**, **Romans 11:15**, etc.).

This hasn't happened yet, for WE are STILL taking part in that ministry! It is our job, and will be our job for long after Jesus returns, to reconcile the people to God! How will we do that? **Colossians 1:20-21**. People are enemies of God because of their wicked works; to reconcile them, we have to get them to repent *and be forgiven!* And there is no forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood!

Which brings us back to the sacrifices. We will be helping Jesus reconcile physical and spiritual Israel to God until the end of the second resurrection, all the while fulfilling the symbolism of the OC priesthood in applying the blood of Christ to pay for the sins of the people... which means that when you fully understand the priesthood of the sons of Aaron, you will better understand your own future!

Now step back and look at **Leviticus 16** again. First, Aaron was washed and dressed. Then he "offers" – **but doesn't kill** – the bullock. Then, two goats are brought and God shows the priesthood which one is Jesus and which one is Satan – by ourselves, without God's help, we can't tell. Then the evil goat is set aside – *but left inside the camp of Israel!* Marked as evil, **but not yet cast out!**

Then the bullock is killed for Aaron and his household. This is very important! The goats, having been separated, are not dealt with until after this bullock which was offered earlier is killed! Then his blood is placed on the mercy seat seven times – once for each thousand years of the 7,000 year week of the creation of that household!

Then the Lord's goat, Jesus, is killed; His blood is ceremoniously placed on the mercy seat the same way, and presumably the same number of times (**Leviticus 16:15**). Then the blood of the bull AND of the goat is sprinkled outside of the temple on the main altar in the courtyard of the temple, also seven times – this time for the second resurrection people.

Notice the pattern; the bullock was offered, then the goat was chosen, then the bullock was killed and his blood used inside the temple; then the goat was killed, and his blood used inside the temple; then BOTH of their bloods were used *outside* the temple at the same time, representing the salvation of the secondfruits!

Then AFTER this is all done, when the high priest – Jesus – has made an END of reconciling the holy place, *and* the tabernacle, *and* the altar, THEN Jesus takes the other goat – which all this time has been left in the camp – and sends him "*by the hand of a fit man*" into the wilderness. Just as Satan is bound and cast into the bottomless pit by a strong angel.

But as we discussed in Lesson 24, this binding of Satan is just the first stage of his punishment. He must be released; then perhaps rebound, possibly more than once, and only at some future point will he finally be destroyed, only after all nations have had a chance to come and stare at him and say, "*Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?*" (**Isaiah 14:16**).

Then finally he will be brought before the Father for final judgment and destruction. And after all this, when the Devil has been destroyed, then the Father can finally dwell with men and put away death and sorrow (**Revelation 21:3-4**), and God can be all in all (**1 Corinthians 15:24-28**).

And that's why at the end of the **Leviticus 16** sacrifice, after the goat is led away in the wilderness and the temple has all been cleansed, only THEN does Aaron offer the ram for his own burnt offering, and

the ram for Israel's burnt offering (**Leviticus 16:23-28**), and clean up all the mess that was left by the sacrifice.

The point of all that is that **Leviticus 16** is HUGE in terms of the time it covers. Just as the prophecies are laid out in overlapping overlays, with some in great detail and some having a broader scope, some sacrifices are set out in tight focus on one event, while others are meant to cover the entire plan of God from beginning to end!

To fully understand **Leviticus 16**, you must fully understand the plan of the holy days which I haven't explained to you yet. So for now, let's talk about something else...

THE THREE SACRIFICES OF JESUS

Every detail in the Bible means something. And in a case like this where we already know that this represents the outline of the entire plan of God, every detail will explain a tremendous event – but you have to *pay attention* to those details!

For example, did you notice that the bullock was not killed at first? **Leviticus 16:6**. It was *offered*, and that brought an atonement for Aaron and his house *before the bullock was killed!* This is huge. Because it means that the bullock's blood was applied to Aaron's household *before the bullock died to give them that blood!*

How was Abraham saved without Christ's blood? Christ's blood wouldn't be shed for 2,000 years! Yet that is the only way his sins could have been forgiven! Or how could Israel be purchased from Egypt by the blood on the doorposts, when the true Lamb wouldn't be sacrificed for 1,500 years?

The answer is that God applied *grace* to cover – atone for – their sins *UNTIL they had the sacrifice of Christ to FORGIVE their sins!* Put in modern terms, the bill was put on Christ's credit card, and the bill wasn't paid off until Jesus actually died.

You learned in Lesson 29 that Jesus made two sacrifices, not just one. Review that lesson if you don't remember it clearly. But that was only part of the story, for actually Jesus made *three* sacrifices! Everyone knows He died as a man to pay for the sins of mankind. This is clearly represented by the goat in **Leviticus 16:15**.

But before that, Jesus gave up His *immortality* to become a man. He gave up His life as a spirit being and became mortal – thus sacrificing His Godhood (**Hebrews 2:14-18** talks about this sacrifice). But there is another sacrifice we didn't explain before, because before that, Jesus gave up His *position* as co-equal God.

According to **John 1:1-3**, in the beginning Jesus was equal with God. But in order to create a family, these two equally perfect, incorruptible, sinless, and righteous Beings had to permit another being to sin until it learned better. This was in direct contradiction to their deepest natures, the fundamental law of the universe being "*the wages of sin is death*".

Yet in order for you to learn that fire was hot, stealing is bad, and gravity kills, you had to be able to experience it for yourself – yet without experiencing the immediate penalty that "*the soul that sins, it*

shall die". There HAD to be a way to permit you to sin *without* you paying for it promptly. For that to happen, the Gods had to turn a blind eye to your sin.

In direct conflict with Their love of righteousness, They had to refrain from speedily and ruthlessly executing judgment upon the first sin. Yet if They *did* refrain from judging you, They would bear the blame for your sins – thus becoming guilty of your sin by proxy (**Leviticus 19:17, 1 Timothy 5:22, Exodus 21:28-29**, etc).

If the Architects of righteousness and creation itself became tainted with sin, the entire universe would cease to function. By Their own laws, They would have to kill each other for Their sins. Nay, by Their own laws They would kill *Themselves* for Their sin.

THE REPROACH OF EGYPT

So a plan had to be devised that would allow one of Them to be tainted, by proxy, with the sins of Their creation; yet allow the Other to remain on the outside, untouched by the sin but able to rescue the tainted One, once He had redeemed Their creation. There was only one way it was possible, and the price Jesus paid was quite literally unimaginable to us who have lived, by comparison, for only a few moments.

Jesus had to create the universe, and all the beings who sin in it, as an autonomous God. As Jesus was independent of the Father, the Father could not be blamed in any way for the actions of any of Jesus' creations. But Jesus, because He tolerated our sins, bore the reproach for them. He was tainted. And that explains **Joshua 5:9**.

This has always been odd; upon entry to the Promised Land, the Israelites were circumcised, then God told Joshua "*this day is the reproach of Egypt rolled off of you*". Why should Joshua bear any reproach from Egypt, a place he hadn't been in 40 years? He hadn't been in charge of the Exodus; he was Moses' servant, but in no way responsible for *anything* that had happened in Egypt.

But "Joshua" is just the Hebrew form of the name "Jesus"; Israel entering the Promised Land represents the first resurrection saints entering the Promised Land – the resurrection – under the command of Jesus. Egypt represented sin, and the forty years of wilderness was the adult lifetime we wander through this world.

In light of those facts, it becomes obvious why God said what He said – Jesus/Joshua, though Himself sinless and faithful, nevertheless bore the reproach for the *people* whom He had led out of Egypt/sin. And not until He had successfully washed them in the Jordan and brought them into the kingdom of God would that reproach be "rolled away"!

Jesus is tainted with the sins of all the people whom He has not yet judged, and will stay tainted until they are all either dead, or they walk into the Promised Land as spiritually circumcised spirit beings. Only then will God say to Him, "*this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off of you*".

Anyway, back to the point: Jesus abdicated His position as coequal God and "got His hands dirty", by going on an undercover commando raid into the siniverse He had created. The Father stayed behind in

the van to rescue Him when the mission was accomplished, once He had created a family for Them both.

This was the first sacrifice, and that abdication bought us grace. It allowed the firstfruits to have their sins covered by grace *even before Jesus' actual death*. And that is why, in **Leviticus 16:6**, the bullock is offered to cover – not purify, not wash away, but just to *cover* – Aaron's/Jesus' sins, and those of His household – us.

All this happened BEFORE the plan began, probably before the creation of angels but certainly before their first sin. The next event was to separate the two goats – picturing the first sin, and the separation of Jesus and Satan. But they were not to be sacrificed yet, just separated! This corresponds to **Ezekiel 28:15**, **Luke 10:18**, and similar scriptures.

Next, the bullock was actually killed. If the offering of the bullock in **verse 6** pictures Jesus' abdication of His throne, then the *killing* of the bullock represents His second sacrifice – His death as an immortal Being to become a mortal human, risking His eternal existence on His love of the law. Jesus' "bullock-death" actually *paid* for the grace that had been promised earlier by the offering of the bullock all those symbolic years earlier.

Jesus believed that His love of law would enable Him to resist the temptations to which we are subjected every day – and He was right. But if He had been wrong, it would have been the end of an eternal existence, and would mean an eternity of loneliness for the Father, who could never build a family on His own. I say this to make you more fully grasp the stakes They were playing for here – the stakes They gambled with to make YOUR salvation possible.

Now remember, this is a linear timeline, with all the significant events in the history of salvation summed up in one play. That being the case, *it means Jesus is alive now, as a man, at this point in the play!* The next thing that happened was the offering of incense.

The "incense" offered up after the death of the bullock – Jesus's God-death – and before the death of the goat – Jesus' man-death – can only be something offered up during Jesus' life as a man. What might that be? **Psalms 141:2**, **Revelation 8:3-4**. Which we can tie directly back to Jesus' life with **Hebrews 5:7**. He offered up this incense *that He die not!* (See **Mark 6:46**, **Luke 22:39-46**, etc.).

Next came the death of the goat, which represents the actual death of His mortal body. Finally the full price for all the sins He permitted us to pursue unchecked had been paid. And while all this was going on, there was no man in the temple (**Leviticus 16:17**), because *there was no MAN in heaven at the time this symbolizes!* (**John 3:13**, **John 20:17**, **Hebrews 9:24**, etc.).

Only after all this had been done does He go outside and purify the altar. More on that later. Afterward He banishes the live goat to the wilderness, but not personally – He delegates that to a strong man. This pictures Satan being cast into the bottomless pit for a time by a mighty angel "*having the key of the bottomless pit*" (**Revelation 20:1**) – then finally the High Priest comes back and sacrifices the two rams.

SIN OFFERINGS AND BURNT OFFERINGS

Remember that the bullock and the two goats were very clearly labeled as “sin offerings”. These are offerings that pay for sin, as you would expect. But the two rams were equally clearly labeled “burnt offerings”. Rather than hide or pay for sin, as a sin offering does, a burnt offering is “a sweet smell” which rises up to God.

Let’s ponder that difference for a moment. Killing something to pay for sin is one thing; but this other animal is offered *above* the price of sin. The bullock and the two goats fully paid for sins in every sense; after all, **Leviticus 16:20** clearly says that the holy place, tabernacle, and the altar had been fully reconciled by that point; the sins have been completely covered.

So why then do we offer more rams? I’m reminded of **Luke 17:10**. After we sin, we are in trouble with God. After the sin is paid for, God is neither angry with us nor pleased with us – we have merely met the bare minimum necessary to exist, and we are “unprofitable servants”.

The real answer is found in **Romans 5:10**. We were merely *reconciled* to God by the death of His Son – reconciled, just as in **Leviticus 16:20**. At that point, God had no reason to kill us – but neither did He have any reason to give us eternal life. Our sins were paid by Jesus’ *death*, but it is Jesus’ *LIFE* that saves us. It is His perfect, sinless life which allows us to be LIKE HIM.

God was not pleased by Jesus’ blood being poured out. It was a necessary sacrifice to pay for our sins, but not something He enjoyed watching. It was, by definition, a sin offering – not a “sweet savor”. But what WAS God pleased by? **Matthew 12:18-21, Isaiah 42:1-4**. What about Jesus pleased God? **Isaiah 42:21**. Why did the Father love Him? **John 15:10**. Were Jesus’ actions burned – tested by fire? **1 Corinthians 3:13, 1 Peter 1:7**.

If Jesus’ death was a sin offering, then it was Jesus’ perfect sinless life that was a sweet-smelling burnt offering. Knowing the conclusion, we can work backwards and support it by using scriptures like **Mark 12:33-34**. Here the scribe, with a conclusion Jesus praised, directly compared obedience to the two great laws as comparable to, and greater than, all the *burnt offerings*.

Micah 6:6-8 again compared burnt offerings, specifically of calves and rams and oil, with the obedience God expects of us – “*to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God*”. **Hosea 6:6** says the same thing in a new way.

Clearly then, the burnt offering that gives God a sweet savor is a symbol of the *works of righteousness* that we do. Mercy, not sacrifice; obedience, not burnt offerings. Back to the point of **Leviticus 16**, the two rams that were offered, one for the house of Aaron and one for the house of Israel – the firstfruits and secondfruits – can only represent Jesus’ *life* being applied to buy them eternal life, just as His death prevented their deaths!

Jesus came to this Earth meek and lowly, as a lamb or a young goat. A lamb is an innocent, harmless, helpless creature, as was Jesus when He first came to this Earth. But Jesus’ works made Him overcome the world, and He left this Earth as a conqueror, one who led captivity captive, much more fittingly symbolized by a grown-up male lamb – a ram. God portrayed the ram as a conquering king in **Daniel 8**, which is precisely how Jesus will return to this Earth.

So you see, from that one chapter alone we have explained almost every symbol and, by doing so, we have uncovered a great deal of new truth; every sacrifice in the Bible, every boring ritual, has a simple, logical meaning behind it – you just have to ask the right questions. For example...

THE ALTAR

We know the earthly altar was simply a shadow of the heavenly altar. If you think about it, there must be SOME use for the altar in heaven – God doesn't sacrifice animals there, and Jesus was sacrificed *here*... so what does it DO? We get a solid clue in **Revelation 6:9-11**.

John saw the souls of the saints under the altar. What were they doing there? That passage specifically references their *blood*, and they – at least some of them – had been killed for their beliefs, such as **Hebrews 11:35-40** relates. But why would the souls be *under* the altar?

We find the answer in Leviticus. Look at **Leviticus 1:5**, **Leviticus 4:25**, **Leviticus 8:15**, etc.; and **Exodus 29:12**. Notice a pattern? The blood of sacrificed animals was poured out on the ground, specifically on the north side of the altar. It is interesting that God's throne is "*in the sides of the North*" (**Psalms 48:2**, **Isaiah 14:13**).

Now read **Leviticus 17:11**. "Life" and "soul" are translated from the same Hebrew word, and are essentially synonymous in this context anyway (**Psalms 72:14**, **Genesis 2:7**, etc.). So what this literally says is "the soul of the flesh is in the blood".

Remember Abel? **Genesis 4:8-12**. Abel's *blood* cried to God *from the ground*. I can make a pretty strong case that this took place just outside the gates of the Garden of Eden in a location corresponding to the very same altar that we were just reading about in Leviticus, but that's a long story and doesn't matter for now.

But what we do know is Abel's life/soul was in his blood. Which was poured out by his evil brother Cain. Where it fell to the ground, quite possibly under the altar outside the gate of Eden (where Abel had recently been sacrificing animals)... and then it cried to God from there. Read **Revelation 6:9** again... doesn't it make more sense now?

The lifeblood containing the souls of all those sacrificed animals was poured out under the northern base of the altar – literally, their souls were placed UNDER the altar! The precise place Revelation shows us, *not* Jesus' soul, but the souls OF THE SAINTS!

NOT THE BLOOD OF JESUS UNDER THE ALTAR

There are two sacrifices which I think we can agree are, beyond any doubt, strictly about Jesus. The atonement sacrifice in **Leviticus 16** we've been talking about, and the passover. The blood of the passover was not poured out on the ground, but painted on the doorposts – to purify the house by paying for its sin.

The NT passover used the symbol of wine for the blood, but in the same way it was not poured out on the ground, it was all drunk to purify our house by paying for our sin – that is, our bodies, and specifically the inside of our bodies – our souls.

Reading **Leviticus 16** carefully, you see that the atonement sacrifice was *not* poured out UNDER the altar. It was placed on the mercy seat, on various objects in the temple and outside of it, on the horns of the altar, but *not* poured out under it. That's why in Revelation, Jesus' soul is not one of the ones crying from under the altar. Why? **Acts 2:31**.

Jesus' soul was not left in the grave, to see corruption, as most of ours will be – at least for a time. Those who are there in the grave, waiting for God to judge the wicked, are told to wait until their fellow brethren shall be fulfilled – those who will either join them under the altar, or bypass the grave at Jesus' return (**1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17**).

Therefore Jesus' blood was not poured out under the altar, because Jesus' soul was not left in in the grave. Jesus' blood instead was used to purify the objects of the temple – something other, lesser sacrifices were incapable of doing for themselves.

This allows us to conclude several things; first, that **the only way that the blood of martyred saints could wind up under the altar is if they had been symbolically sacrificed upon it**; and therefore, the saints themselves represent some, if not many, of the sacrifices. This is huge, but we'll devote more time to it later.

Second, it tells us that the space under the altar represents the grave, specifically the grave where the righteous are kept – see **Psalms 26:9**. There David, as we now know, was asking for his soul – his blood – to be gathered with the righteous under the altar, not gathered with the wicked somewhere else.

Taking that a step higher to the spiritual, it tells us that the heavenly altar is used by God as a sort of soul-library where our spirits are kept on file while we sleep between death and resurrection. Those souls make another symbolic appearance, less well known, in **Revelation 16:6-7**.

SO WHAT DOES THE ALTAR REPRESENT?

If the souls *under* the altar represent the saints, then it follows that the place *under* the altar represents the grave. But what about the heavenly altar itself – what does it represent? It's actually been staring us in the face the whole time. Where has every saint who ever lived been sacrificed? What is the ONE thing they all have in common?

Need more clues? Where has every saint who ever lived been buried? Not enough? Ok, try this – we know that Abel's soul is under the altar. Alright.... so WHERE did Abel's soul cry to God from? **Genesis 4:10-11. FROM THE EARTH!**

Think about it! Where do the prayers of the saints come from? **Revelation 8:3-4** – the golden altar. Where has every saint prayed from? Earth! Also, the altar held fire (**Isaiah 6:6-7**), which was used to purify the unclean. What does fire represent? **1 Corinthians 3:13, Zechariah 13:9**.

How is our faith tried? **1 Peter 1:7**. Where has every saint who ever lived been tried? Earth. The Earth exists to give the saints a place to learn the lessons of sin and feel the pain of them, and overcome the temptations of sin.

And when they die, they are buried – placed *under* the Earth/altar, there to sleep and await the resurrection. The Earth “opens her mouth” to receive their blood. Also, the vast majority of martyrs

have died in Europe or the Middle-East. Which, if the Earth is the altar, would mean that their blood was poured out on the *north* side!

And when you think about it, if heaven is God's throne, and the Earth is His footstool (**Isaiah 66:1**)... you can sort of imagine God sitting on the Ark and resting His feet on the altar. I mean, God has long legs, right?

FOUR HORNS

Finally, the altar had "horns" on it – **Exodus 27:1-2**, four horns to be exact, one on each corner. What do horns represent in the Bible? **Daniel 7:24**. So four kingdoms – and behind kingdoms are their ruling angels. Now read **Zechariah 1:18-21**.

Four Gentile kingdoms scattered Israel and Judah – Assyria and Babylon for certain are meant; perhaps Egypt and Greece are the others? Regardless, these nations scattered Israel where? **Zechariah 2:6**. And, under the direction of these four "carpenters", undoubtedly angels, from whence shall they be gathered? **Isaiah 11:12**.

This tells us that the Earth has, in a symbolic sense, four "corners", corresponding either to the cardinal directions (N, S, E, W), or the actual corners of a compass (NW, NE, SE, SW). I favor the latter option, because the altar seems to have been aligned with the square sides facing the cardinal directions, making the horns point to the corners of the map. Regardless, at the appropriate time, God shall send angels to those four corners to gather together the elect (**Matthew 24:31, Mark 13:27**).

And finally, in **Revelation 7:1** God specifically tells us these four corners, four angels, four winds, are on the Earth. Just like the altar has four horns on it – horns which must be periodically anointed with blood, horns which could be appealed to for clemency (**1 Kings 1:50-53**), even though it didn't always work (**1 Kings 2:29-34**).

The horns also served a practical purpose, in tying down the sacrifices (**Psalms 118:27**). They are "bound" with cords; just as we are in bondage to obey the powers of this Earth (**Galatians 4:1-3**). We are now "*a little lower than the angels*" (**Hebrews 2:7-9**), but not only that – made lower than the angels *for the suffering of death*.

That verse of course is specifically speaking of Jesus, but Galatians plainly says that WE are as children who are in bondage under the elements of the world, until Jesus redeems us. But what does it say to us, once our bonds have been cut? **Psalms 116:13-17**. And where will that happen? **Verses 18-19**.

WHY IS THE DEATH OF THE SAINTS PRECIOUS?

So far we have identified the sacrifices of Jesus in the Atonement sacrifice; since it is a history of salvation, Jesus, meaning "Savior", would have to be at the center of it. But now let's look at our part in the sacrificial system.

What is the sacrifice that we offer to God? **Hebrews 13:14-16**. The focus of this scripture is on "praise" and "thanks", but too many people ignore the part that says "to do good... with such sacrifices

God is well pleased”. So among other things, our doing good qualifies as a sacrifice. What is pleasing to God? **1 John 3:22**.

What did Samuel say was better than sacrifices? **1 Samuel 15:22**. For something to be *better* than something else, **it has to do the same thing, only do it BETTER!** In other words, obedience and sacrifice must both represent the same thing – one is simply *better* than the other! Likewise **listening is better than the fat of rams**. Therefore when you see the fat of rams being burned in the sacrificial system, *it represents listening to God’s words!*

Earlier in this lesson you learned that Jesus’ works were a burnt offering of a sweet savor to God; but so is ours! **2 Corinthians 2:14-16**. WE are a sacrifice of a sweet savor (smell) to God, both in them that we save and in those that we fail to save; when our efforts help someone to understand the truth and turn from their sins, we are a sweet savor to God because our works brought light where before there was darkness.

On the other hand, when we tell someone to repent and they refuse, we are STILL a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God because we offered them the truth and forced them to make a choice – making them either “hot or cold” (**Revelation 3:15-16**), and one day they shall know that God did indeed send a prophet among them (**Ezekiel 2:1-5**), which is pleasing in God’s sight.

But for us to create that sweet savor *we must be burned upon the altar – that is to say, we must be given a fiery trial upon the Earth!* So some, perhaps many or even most, of the burnt offerings in the Bible must represent US, not Jesus.

It means that OUR works, not only Jesus’, constitute sacrifices! OUR praise, mercy, listening, obedience, fellowship, and doing good must be portrayed in the sacrifices for all THOSE things are sacrifices of a sweet savor that WE offer up from ourselves!

Does God see us as sacrificial animals? **Psalms 44:22, 25**. David explicitly says that we are killed for God’s sake “*all the day long*” and that we are “*counted as sheep for the slaughter*”. He also said “*our soul is bowed down to the DUST*”. In a sacrifice, the soul is in the blood, which is poured out into the dust at the base of the altar!

Jesus was counted as a sheep for the slaughter (**Acts 8:32**), which is not a surprise – what’s important is that **David CLEARLY says WE are counted as sheep for the slaughter – sacrifices – JUST AS JESUS WAS!**

Finally, there is one great contrast which we can use to nail down this idea, which is that Jesus’ sacrifice was sprinkled around the temple, and Paul said that Jesus’ sacrifice was better than – and therefore, comparable to! – the blood of Abel (**Hebrews 12:24**).

Jesus’ blood which was sprinkled on the mercy seat, altar, and so on during the atonement sacrifice was *better* than Abel’s blood which was **POURED OUT** on the ground – the ground under the altar. Why? **Hebrews 3:3**.

Jesus built our “house” – our bodies (**Psalms 139:15**) – and therefore His life has more value than all of our lives put together, just as we have more value than all the houses we might construct combined. Thus, legally, His life can pay for ours.

But that doesn’t mean our lives are worthless. And more importantly, the fact that Paul COMPARED the two – Jesus’ sprinkling and Abel’s pouring – proves that they are similar in kind, differing only in degree and quality.

These are just a few of the scriptures that show us being considered sacrifices – so why is it so blasphemous to suggest that some, if not many, of the Levitical sacrifices are about us, not Jesus? I brought you to this conclusion via the scenic route, but what did Paul plainly say; was he a sacrifice, or not? **Philippians 2:16-18**. Was Paul crucified – sacrificed – for the sake of the world? **Galatians 6:14**. Did Paul receive “burnt offering” sacrifices from other people? **Philippians 4:15-18**.

Notice that Paul said their “gift”, showed “fruit” – that is, spiritual growth – on their part. And that these things were a sacrifice “of a sweet savour”. Knowing this concept applies to spiritual sacrifices, we can see the hints of this in other places that talk about charity, such as **2 Corinthians 8:9, 14, 9:11-12**.

Giving things to others that you might need is, by definition, a sacrifice. And this sacrifice is not just for the benefit of the poor, but for God to see and be pleased with you – hence, it is a sacrifice of a sweet smell to God, and corresponds to the burnt offerings of Leviticus!

And in that same passage it connects this to Jesus’ sacrifice, in **2 Corinthians 8:9**, which we can connect directly to a burnt offering in **Ephesians 5:2**. The answers are all there, we just have to ask the right questions and pay attention to the details.

OUR SIN OFFERING

We cannot die for the sins of others because we ourselves are not clean. We can only die for our own sins, which doesn’t really help us that much (**Romans 6:23**). However, if we voluntarily “commit suicide” by killing our old man, is that not a sacrifice? Do we not die to one life in order to live anew in another? **Romans 6:4**. And having died that death, put on a new man – one patterned after the *spiritual* image of Christ? **Colossians 3:9-10**. And if made in His image, can we not be sacrificed with Him?

Whether or not we are drawn and quartered or boiled in oil, the fact is that merely by being baptized we have made a sacrifice. We have died for our sins, and that is – again, this is obvious but I can’t stop pointing it out – that is *by definition* a sacrifice for sins!

And we chose to do so because we love the truth and desire to live life where we think of others before ourselves. And as we live in that new life, and if we do it well, we reflect well on God (**Philippians 2:15-18**), which makes God, and our teachers, proud of us – rejoicing that their time and their sacrifices were well spent. And this is our burnt offering.

But are these things we do just once? **1 Corinthians 15:31**. Paul died daily. Was Paul walking in Jesus’ footsteps, sacrificing himself daily as Jesus had? **Galatians 2:20**. Was he a constant reflection, a constant sacrifice on the altar of this Earth? **2 Corinthians 4:10-11**. Notice in all these the contrast –

we die with Jesus, that His life might be displayed. We mimic Jesus' sin-offering so that we are also able to mimic His burnt-offering.

But if we are sacrificed, for whom are we sacrificed? What does our sacrifice buy? To answer that, let's go back to Egypt for a moment and think about the passover. Who was in danger from the death angel? **Exodus 12:12, 29**. Only the firstborn – of clean, unclean, man and beast – were killed by the death angel. Only if they had the blood of the Lamb, the sacrifice of Christ, on their houses were they spared.

But the second-born were not in any danger from the death angel! He was specifically and solely after the firstborn, and the passover service was exclusively to protect THEM – to pay for the sins of the FIRSTBORN, *NOT* the second-born! The blood of Christ was wasted on them, for they were in no danger – not then, anyway. **Because it was not their time to be judged!**

Shortly after that, in **Exodus 13:11-15**, God told Moses the firstborn of every person or beast belonged to the Lord; the firstborn of all clean animals were to be sacrificed to Him, and all unclean animals were to be either killed, or bought back from God by sacrificing a lamb instead.

This included firstborn male Israelites, who also had to be bought with the death of a lamb – it is not clear if this was done at birth, at some special date, or – as I think more likely – at the passover service, when they were redeemed by a lamb along with the rest of Israel.

Regardless we can see a clear precedent that one unclean donkey – which, although a firstborn, is not fit to serve God – must be either killed or redeemed with a lamb. Which tells us that one animal can be sacrificed for another – which is a new piece of information.

So it was the passover lamb which paid for the firstborn's lives. Just as it is the passover lamb or goat (**Exodus 12:5**) which paid for the firstborn's lives in the spiritual sense. The atonement goat does the same thing, because it tells the exact same story at a much larger scale.

Therefore the passover, the atonement, and **Exodus 13:11-15** – along with many other examples as well – all mean the exact same thing, just from different angles or zoom levels – they all picture the sacrifice of Jesus paying for the sins of the firstborn saints.

But who pays for the sins of the secondfruits? The passover lamb is never relevant to them, for it is only there to pay for the sins of the firstborn. But there is a second passover for those who were not able to come the first time (**Numbers 9:5-13**), which Jesus said He will keep with US in the kingdom (**Matthew 26:27-29**), and which is certainly relevant, though I am not yet able to fully explain it.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

For thousands of years people have been trying to explain sacrifices and put them in some sort of context, and mostly they have failed. As always, they failed because they were looking for the wrong answer – the one they wanted.

But the real answer is so ridiculously obvious, it is almost a self-evident truth. The fact we missed it all these years is just proof that God has been hiding these things until the end times – or that we're just really dumb.

We've been asking the wrong question. We've been asking "what do the sacrifices represent". That's not the right question at all. The right question is "what does it *mean* to represent something as a sacrifice?"

Think about it! We know Jesus was sacrificed. And we've also said many times Jesus was sacrificed for us, *in our place*. People are always talking about how this sacrifice or that sacrifice represents Jesus, and we've been working in that mistaken mindset... ***but the real key is that sacrifices don't represent Jesus... Jesus, our sacrifice, represented US!***

People are so obsessed with things representing Jesus that they miss the OBVIOUS fact that Jesus died representing us! He took our sins upon Himself. For the purposes of the law, He pretended to BE us so that HIS death would satisfy the law in our stead!

So take that logic one step farther – if we sacrifice an animal for our sin, what does that animal represent? Jesus? No! If we sacrifice an animal for OUR sins, then that animal dies in our place – it dies as if WE were dying. So it represents US, in the most literal sense possible!!

So when Paul said "I die daily", as far as the law is concerned, that was true – Jesus, pretending to be Paul, offered His blood as if it had been Paul's blood *every time Paul sinned!* So PAUL died daily, even though it was JESUS who paid for that death each time, in his place – thus, quite literally, Jesus represented Paul in symbol! Just as He represents you and me each time He is called upon to cover the price for our sins!

And as we've said many times, Jesus bears the blame for our sins that are not corrected; He is tainted with the sins of His creation. And so because of that, Jesus had to die – and that is portrayed in Leviticus by an animal which is sacrificed BY Jesus, FOR Jesus!

Because if Jesus sacrifices an animal for HIS sins, and the sins of His house, *THEN* that animal – and that animal alone – represents Jesus! So when the high priest – picturing Jesus – sacrificed animals on the day of atonement, THOSE animals represent Jesus, literally offering up Himself as a sacrifice! **(Hebrews 7:27)**.

And those animals "whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp" **(Hebrews 13:11)**. Those animals are special, for only a very few of the millions of sacrificed animals were allowed inside the sanctuary. Why? **Because most other animals did not represent Jesus, and their blood was not pure enough to be tolerated in the most holy place!**

Do *all* those other sacrifices represent us? I'm still not sure. There is a lot of information to be processed before I will make a blanket statement like that. This lesson is not going to give you all the answers, just the keys you need to discover them for yourself.

But one last thing I will explain before we wrap up this lesson. I said before that we cannot sacrifice ourselves for others; but that wasn't the whole story. It is true that we cannot die for others because we are ourselves unclean. But once we die, those sins of that old man are paid for. What then? The life that we then live by the grace of God, can THAT life be given as a sacrifice?

Once Jesus purifies you and you are made a new being, pure and sinless – and kept sinless by repentance and the blood of Christ – you CAN become a legal sacrifice “without blemish” because your old man is dead; thus you legally can be considered a firstborn sacrifice.

OC Israel was, by definition, second resurrection material. And we’ve firmly established that the blood poured out under the altar was the saints; it follows then that the *animals* which were sacrificed on the altar (who provided that blood) were *also* the saints.

So WHY were those animals sacrificed upon the altar? **Leviticus 17:11** tells us that God gave second-resurrection-bound OC Israel the blood of the animals poured out upon the altar. That blood was there to make an atonement *for Israel’s souls!* That blood *represented* the payment for the souls of the Israelites!

One more time – the souls of those animals was poured out under the altar to buy an atonement for the souls of OC Israel. We have established that the altar is the Earth and at least some of the sacrifices are the saints, this means that the *saints* are having *their souls* poured out in order to buy an atonement for the second resurrection people!

Do we have a different altar, which Israel could not use? **Hebrews 13:10**. It is upon that altar that we offer up spiritual sacrifices (**1 Peter 2:5**), and more importantly, it is on that altar that *we are sacrificed!* (**Galatians 6:14, Romans 8:36**)

The sacrifice of the saints PAYS for the souls of the second resurrection people! Not to grant them eternal life – that must still be Jesus’ job – but to let them continue living, for now, without paying for the wages of their sins. God told Abraham that were there only ten righteous people living in a city full of wicked people, God would spare the city (**Genesis 18:32**).

Were it not for the saints salting the Earth, God would have destroyed it long ago. WE are the salt of the Earth (**Matthew 5:13**). Did salt play a major part in the sacrificial system? **Mark 9:49-50**. We are to have salt in ourselves, and as we are sacrificed daily it is to be with salt (**Ezekiel 43:23-24, Leviticus 2:13**), **just as our speech (which is a sacrifice, remember? Hebrews 13:15-16), which must be seasoned with SALT! (Colossians 4:6)**

Not to be too self-centered, but what God is doing with the firstfruits today is important. It’s huge, in the history of the universe. And we will be vital in the salvation of the rest of mankind later – assuming, of course, that we survive today. I won’t go so far as to say that God NEEDS us... but the secondfruits do. And “need” or not, God certainly plans to use us to teach them what they need to know to be members of His Eternal Family.

On that note, it’s fitting to close with **Romans 8:17-23**. Notice that? The whole of God’s creation is groaning together right now – the universally unhealthy and unhappy people, the cattle locked in crowded feed lots, the birds sickly from eating leftover McDonald’s food, the crops wasting away in drought caused by the selfish greed of mankind...

All of the whole creation is weeping together, anxiously – nay, desperately – awaiting their only hope. Awaiting the day when the firstborn sons of God are finally converted and come back to this Earth

having their own obedience filled, ready to avenge all disobedience and enforce the laws of God. Ready to make the deserts blossom with roses and the waste places filled with laughter.

That is not the reality today. That is the hope. And that is why **Romans 8:24-25** concludes *“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”*

That hope will only become reality if you offer up yourself as a sacrifice to God; submitting your will to His, giving up your old life to become a new man in Christ. Letting Him represent you at your own funeral, so that you in turn can one day help your fellow firstfruits represent the rest of the world at theirs.

Just make sure your sacrifice burns with a sweet smell.

This work is completely non-denominational and is meant to fulfill Christ's great commission to "*preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15). This publication is not to be sold; "*freely ye have received, freely give*" (Matthew 10:8).

The Bible tells us to PROVE ALL THINGS, and The Simple Answers encourages people to do just that. If you cannot PROVE what you believe, you have no right to believe it! Many of the things we print are shocking because they are different from what you've heard, but if something we say offends or upsets you, we hope you will take the time to set aside your preconceived ideas and PROVE your point from the Bible to see if you truly have been right all these years.

We are dedicated to providing the SIMPLE answers to difficult questions. Please submit questions and/or comments to us using the contact information below.

We do not beg for donations and will print our publications in faith trusting God to provide the means. We are supported entirely by tithes and donations. If you would like to see this understanding sent to more people, we welcome your support.

Nathaniel Burson
10758 Hwy 155 South
Big Sandy, TX 75755

Questions@TheSimpleAnswers.com

For more articles, visit
www.TheSimpleAnswers.com