

Jesus, the Perfect Sacrifice

Notes for February 26th

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Background

Texts
Heb. 9:15, Gen. 15:6-21, Jer. 34:8-22, Eph. 3:14-19, Heb. 7:27, Heb. 10:10, Heb. 9:22-28

The relationship between the Covenants and the ministry of Christ on Earth and in Heaven is the theme of the Book of Hebrews.

It was pointed out last week that the word “better” is used more in Hebrews than the rest of the NT. The Covenants are not *Bad* and *Better*, but *Good* and *Better*. All the early Covenants were established by God himself. It was not the failure of God that limited their capabilities, rather it was human failure.

That should be no surprise to us.

The Mosaic Covenant was totally different to the Sacrificial activities of the Ancient World.

In the Ancient World there were collection of Gods who needed to be appeased in whatever ways it made sense to those who worshipped them. Everything was driven by FEAR. The concept of thanking the Gods was extremely limited.

If you examine the Levitical pattern of Sacrifices and the Annual pattern of Festivals given through Moses, we see balance and rules that were intended to instruct the people on the goodness of God, and the need to Love God and to Love Others. It's not an accident they contain the 2 Great Commandments that Jesus later endorsed.

The [LSG notes for this week](#) outline the different types of Sacrifices. Like the Festivals they emphasise a broad range of the needs of the Spiritual Life. It was all based on the Love, Goodness and Promises of God.

Thanksgiving and Rejoicing were important. Relationships that sometimes required forgiveness and restitution were important. The sacrificial requirements were tailored to embrace rich and poor alike. The message was clear: it's your attitude that counts, not your money!

Joseph and Mary and the baby Jesus were part of the poor of society. Protecting the poor was always central to God's Guidance. Whenever that was neglected, the Prophets cried out in protest.

The use of the sacrifice and offerings emphasised God's concern over sin. They were also vehicles for thanksgiving, celebration, community rejoicing and socialization, and contributed to the provisions for those who served in the Temple, and the Levites as a whole. Jer. 34:8-22, one of our texts for today also addresses the issue of releasing fellow citizens from slavery every 7th year.

Repeatedly, the nation strayed away to the worship of other Gods and neglected the Temple worship. It seems incredible that at the time Josiah became king, the Temple was so neglected they had even lost the copies of the Mosaic Law. This pattern of apostasy repeated itself again and again throughout the nation's history. It was not God who broke the Covenant, it was the people.

Last week there seemed to be a consensus that the New Covenant was in fact a Universal Covenant: God was ALWAYS focused on man's heart and mind relationship with himself, not on blind obedience. Over the centuries there were many OT characters who lived in that sort of relationship with God. When Paul talks in Romans 2:1-16 about those who would be saved despite having no written revelation he was telling us that God is focused totally on the Heart and Mind. Jesus tells us the same.

One question about the OT SIN OFFERINGS.

- **In Leviticus 4 it repeatedly uses the phrase 'sins unintentionally'. Heb. 9:7 uses the phrase 'committed in ignorance'.**
- **WHY?**

Jer. 31: 17-34 (READ):

The context for the New Covenant is that of the return from CAPTIVITY. Even in Jeremiah's day God was longing for Israel to open their hearts to his love. The significance of the wording of the Covenant is that it spells out GOD'S ULTIMATE GOAL.

*No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another,
'Know the Lord', because they will all know me.*

- **When will that reality happen?**
- **DISCUSS!**

I believe we can only grasp the significance of the Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension and Priestly Ministry in the framework of the above question.

Hebrews was written when it was painfully obvious that the TEMPLE WORSHIP instituted under Moses had clearly demonstrated its inadequacies. Shortly after the book of Malachi was written Jewish scholars had concluded that God was no longer talking to the nation. The age of the prophets was over. There is substantial evidence to suggest that the OT writings were ratified within the Jewish world as early as 4 BC, and certainly before the Septuagint was translated, long before the coming of Christ.

The temple destroyed in AD 70 had been built by Herod the Great who had tried to kill Jesus after his birth. By that time the temple rulers were more political than spiritual, and more interested in money and power than in worship. That explains why they didn't like Jesus or the things he stood for.

HEB. 9:11-15; 22-28 [READ]

- Why is Jesus the Perfect Sacrifice?
- What was accomplished by his Death?
- What was accomplished by his Resurrection?
- When he entered the Most Holy Place was, he just starting to fight the battle against sin, or was the battle done?
- What still needs to be accomplished before the New Covenant reaches the goal of everyone 'Knowing God'?

- Is there still a problem in heaven, or is the existing problem totally on earth?
- What tools are available to God to finish the task?

Resources

- [LSG #9: 'Jesus, The Perfect Sacrifice'](#)