

The Guilt Offering  
Leviticus 5:14-6:7, 7:1-10  
Leviticus series #6  
June 5, 2022

### Pre-Sermon Remarks

- All of June in Leviticus, then July in the Psalms, back in August-September

### Review: The Five Offerings

1. Burnt offering | Wholehearted devotion to God
2. Grain offering | Abundant life is provided by God
3. Fellowship offering | Shalom is found in the presence of God
4. Sin offering | Purification in order to come close to God
5. Guilt offering | Relational reconciliation in God's presence

### **\*PRAYER\***

### Introduction

- Elias (8) experience of shalom | Everything is as it should be!
- The upside-down of that: things are askew, something off, not as it should be
- The guilt offering addresses a way to repair things when they are not right

### Not Right With God

**Leviticus 5** <sup>14</sup> Then the Lord spoke to Moses: <sup>15</sup> "If someone offends by sinning unintentionally in regard to any of the Lord's holy things, he must bring his penalty for guilt to the Lord: an unblemished ram from the flock (based on your assessment of its value in silver shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel) as a guilt offering. <sup>16</sup> He is to make restitution for his sin regarding any holy thing, adding a fifth of its value to it, and give it to the priest. Then the priest will make atonement on his behalf with the ram of the guilt offering, and he will be forgiven."

- Remember: Relational breach with the context of a covenant relationship with God.
- There are certain special (holy) tools used in worship: shovels, spoons, forks | BBQ
  - Someone used them in a common/regular way
  - Maybe someone "stole" it accidentally
- *Well, we can't use this any more. Here's it's value plus 20% | Then offer a ram to say "sorry"*

### Not Right With Neighbor

**Leviticus 6** <sup>1</sup> The Lord spoke to Moses: <sup>2</sup> "When someone sins and offends the Lord by deceiving his neighbor in regard to a deposit, a security, or a robbery; or defrauds his neighbor; <sup>3</sup> or finds something lost and lies about it; or swears falsely about any of the sinful things a person may do—<sup>4</sup> once he has sinned and acknowledged his guilt—he must return what he stole or defrauded, or the deposit entrusted to him, or the lost item he found, <sup>5</sup> or anything else about which he swore falsely. He will make full restitution for it and add a fifth of its value to it. He is to pay it to its owner on the

day he acknowledges his guilt. <sup>6</sup> Then he is to bring his guilt offering to the Lord: an unblemished ram from the flock according to your assessment of its value as a guilt offering to the priest. <sup>7</sup> In this way the priest will make atonement on his behalf before the Lord, and he will be forgiven for anything he may have done to incur guilt.”

- Biggest section: property damage to a person
  - Interesting side note: not a crime against the state, sin against individual and God
- Key: **he acknowledges his guilt**
- Here's a full repayment plus 20%
- Then, once again, you offer a ram to say sorry to God

### **Not Right With Self**

**Leviticus 5** <sup>17</sup> “If someone sins and without knowing it violates any of the Lord’s commands concerning anything prohibited, he is guilty, and he will bear his iniquity. <sup>18</sup> He must bring an unblemished ram from the flock according to your assessment of its value as a guilt offering to the priest. Then the priest will make atonement on his behalf for the error he has committed unintentionally, and he will be forgiven. <sup>19</sup> It is a guilt offering; he is indeed guilty before the Lord.”

- Vs. 17 “he is guilty” is one word, *ashem*. Vague, so translations differ.

**Jay Sklar** There are two different understandings of this law. In the first, sinners do not know they have sinned, but then learn of their wrong and deal with it properly. This approach is possible, although it is not clear why repayment would not be mentioned. In the second understanding, sinners suspect that they have sinned, but never learn what the sin is. This is the standard rabbinic approach and is followed by many commentators. It has the advantage of explaining why this case does not mention repayment: the sinner never learns what the sin is and therefore does not know what the repayment should be. It also fits well with the fact that Israelites were fearful of inadvertently committing sins that remained unknown (Ps. 19:12), a fear common to others in the Ancient Near East. This law would address that fear. A natural question then arises: How do sinners know to bring a sacrifice if they do not know what their sin is? The understanding of the root *’šm* presented earlier provides the answer: they experience some type of misfortune and conclude that they must be suffering guilt’s consequences. Verses 17b–18a are in fact best translated: ‘... and he does not know [what he has done], but he suffers guilt’s consequences and bears his punishment, then he will bring to the priest as a reparation offering a ram from the flock ...’ In short, the person has sinned, but is unaware of what the sin is. The sinner therefore assumes the worst (the profaning of a holy item) and brings the costly reparation offering for atonement and forgiveness.

- Either way, most commentators understand the “be guilty” to be an internal struggle
- And also, either way, God provides a sacrifice even for this personal, internal experience

Recap: our sins can affect relationship with 1) God, 2) neighbors, or 3) ourselves. The guilt offering, or reparation offering, is given as a way to take steps back toward Shalom.

### Three Lessons to Learn

#### 1) Relationship with God is inseparable from right relationship with others

- Note how in all cases, both God and man are involved
  - 6:2 *When someone sins and offends the Lord by deceiving his neighbor...*
- God receives our treatment of others as though it were how we treat him
  - Prov. 19:7 *Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD...*
  - Matt. 25:45 *Whatever you do for the least of these you do to me...*
- So when we sin, we need to consider both the vertical and horizontal angles
  - How has this sin affected relationship with God? My neighbor? Myself?

#### 2) Repentance and restitution go together wherever possible

- True repentance is costly, there's no cheap "oh God forgives me, moving on"
  - Sin causes a mess, it hurts relationships, it leaves a debt to be repaid
- Toward God: 20% repayment above-and-beyond the cost of the temple tools
- Toward neighbor: *same exact 20%* above what the cost/damage was
- Toward self: even though there's no repayment, find a way to be at peace within yourself

\*\*Interesting to note: in Exodus 22, it says that thieves must pay back **double**. *So true repentance is costly, but not repenting is even more costly.*

#### 3) Human efforts to repay will always fall short, so trust God's grace

- Make reparations wherever you can, but acknowledge that some things are still done
  - Does 20% really cover the cost of what has been done?
- This is why there a sacrifice.

**Roy Gane** The best human efforts to fix problems caused by moral faults are inadequate. In addition to any other liabilities we incur, whether to God or human beings, the historical fact of relational damage (sin) creates an additional kind of debt that must be paid by sacrifice even when we discharge our earthly responsibility to make wrongs right as best we can. We can never come up with enough to pay this debt. All we can give are tokens, which is what the ancient animal sacrifices were.

### Jesus, Our Guilt Offering

1. Jesus is inseparably God and man
2. Jesus offers us costly forgiveness
3. Jesus covers a debt we could never repay
4. Jesus invites us into costly repentance
5. Jesus restores our guilty consciences
6. Jesus commands us to make things right if at all possible
  - a. **Roy Gane** Forgiveness through Christ is not a 'cheap grace' way to declare bankruptcy on our obligations to other people.

### **Today's Guilt Offering**

1. Where have you offended God? Jesus stands ready with forgiveness.
2. Who have you wronged? Jesus' forgiveness compels you to make repayment.
3. Is your conscience guilty? All your sin is covered by his grace.

### **Prayer**

**Psalm 19** <sup>12</sup>Who perceives his unintentional sins? Cleanse me from my hidden faults. <sup>13</sup>Moreover, keep your servant from willful sins; do not let them rule me. Then I will be blameless and cleansed from blatant rebellion. <sup>14</sup>May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.

### **Scripture Reading**

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