

LESSON 5

SACRIFICES OF ISRAEL

Reading : Gen. 4 : 1 - 15; Lev. 1 - 7

Memory verses : Heb. 10 : 1, 14

Theme: To learn that worshiper can attain perfection not through the Old Testament sacrifices which were merely shadows, but only by the sanctification possible through the supreme sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Introduction: Sacrifices were prevalent in the world from the beginning of history. The clothing of skin given by God to the first parents after they sinned can be considered as pointing to the redemptive death of Jesus Christ and as the beginning of sacrifices. Later we see sacrifices being offered by faith by Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job and others. It was through the Law given to Moses on Mount Sinai that God revealed the importance and meanings of sacrifices. All sacrifices were shadows of the single most important sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. The study of various sacrifices will lead us to the understanding the sanctification, perfection and blessings available through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Levite sacrifices: The commandments given by God regarding sacrifices are recorded in the first seven chapters of the book of Leviticus. Hence they are called Levite sacrifices. There are five important sacrifices. They are (burnt offering, ^{sweet} meal offering, peace offering, sin offering and trespass offering.) Details of these five offerings are found in the first five chapters of Leviticus. The next two chapters give conditions governing the offerings. Apart from these, there are drink offering, free will offering, thanksgiving offering, etc. which form part of five main offering.

Sacrifices- two types : Out of five Levite sacrifices, the first three are sweet savour offerings and the other two are non -sweet savour offerings. Sweet savour offerings are those in which sweet smelling materials are also added to the sacrificial animals. These are not added in the non sweet savour offerings. Sweet savour offerings are associated with worship and non-sweet savour offering are associated with remission of sins. Sweet savour offerings tell us how God sees Jesus Christ and the other

two offerings show what Jesus Christ has accomplished for mankind. Sweet savour offerings are brought by worshiper voluntarily. On the otherhand, worshiper is commanded to bring sin and trespass offerings. A sinner must offer sin and trespass offering first. After that he is entitled to offer the other sacrifices which are thanksgiving offerings.

Meaning of sacrifices: Various sacrifices were offered continually in the Old Testament age. They were all shadows of the single sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary (Heb. 10: 10-14). The essence of all the five sacrifices is contained in that single sacrifice. The death of Jesus Christ brought glory and honour to the name of God. Therefore, Jesus Christ became a sweet smelling sacrifice for God (Eph. 5 : 12). Moreover, His death was sufficient for the remission of the sins of mankind. "In the end of the world, He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9 : 26). "He is the propitiation for our sins; not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). Therefore, the substance of all the propitiatory offerings is Christ, Himself.

Jesus Christ was not only the sacrificial animal, but also the High Priest who offered the sacrifice and even the altar where the sacrifice was offered. In the Old Testament sacrifices, the altar the sacrifice and the priest were all different. But in the ultimate sacrifice, all these three have merged into one person, Jesus Christ. Let us praise God for the unique sacrificial death of the unique Christ. At the same time let us offer ourselves as sacrifices in the presence of God.

QUESTIONS

1. Which is the event which marks the beginning of sacrifices?
2. How do we know that sacrifices were being offered even before the Law was given?
3. What are the Levite sacrifices? How are they classified?
4. Give the names of the sacrifices other than the five main sacrifices mentioned in Leviticus.
5. What are the differences between the sweet savour and the non sweet savour offerings?
6. Prove that total substance of all the sacrifices is Jesus Christ.