

Old Testament Sacrifices

NAME	OT REFERENCES	ELEMENTS	PURPOSE
BURNT OFFERING	Lev 1; 6:8-13; 8:18-21; 16:24	Bull, ram or male bird (dove or young pigeon for poor); wholly consumed; no defect	Voluntary act of worship; atonement for unintentional sin in general; expression of devotion, commitment and complete surrender to God
GRAIN OFFERING	Lev 2; 6:14-23	Grain, fine flour, olive oil, incense, baked bread (cakes or wafers), salt; no yeast or honey; accompanied burnt offering and fellowship offering (along with drink offering)	Voluntary act of worship; recognition of God's goodness and provisions; devotion to God
FELLOWSHIP OFFERING	Lev 3; 7:11-34	Any animal without defect from herd or flock; variety of breads	Voluntary act of worship; thanksgiving and fellowship (it included a communal meal)
SIN OFFERING	Lev 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30; 8:14-17; 16:3-22	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Young bull: for high priest and congregation 2. Male goat: for leader 3. Female goat or lamb: for common person 4. Dove or pigeon: for the poor 5. Tenth of an ephah of fine flour: for the very poor 	Mandatory atonement for specific unintentional sin; confession of sin; forgiveness of sin; cleansing from defilement
GUILT OFFERING	Lev 5:14-6:7; 7:1-6	Ram or lamb	Mandatory atonement for unintentional sin requiring restitution; cleansing from defilement; make restitution; pay 20% fine

When more than one kind of offering was presented (as in Nu 6:16, 17), the procedure was usually as follows: (1) sin offering or guilt offering, (2) burnt offering, (3) fellowship offering and grain offering (along with a drink offering). This sequence furnishes part of the spiritual significance of the sacrificial system. First, sin had to be

dealt with (sin offering or guilt offering). Second, the worshiper committed himself completely to God (burnt offering and grain offering). Third, fellowship or communion between the Lord, the priest and the worshiper (fellowship offering) was established. To state it another way, there were sacrifices of expiation

(sin offerings and guilt offerings), consecration (burnt offerings and grain offerings) and communion (fellowship offerings—these included vow offerings, thank offerings and freewill offerings).

The sacrificial law, therefore, with **the five species of sacrifices** which it enjoins, embraces every aspect in which Israel was to manifest its true relation to the Lord its God. Whilst

- (1) the sanctification of the whole man in self-surrender to the Lord was shadowed forth in the **burnt-offerings**,
- (2) the fruits of this sanctification in **the meat-offerings**, and
- (3) the blessedness of the possession and enjoyment of saving grace in **the peace-offerings**;

(4 & 5) **the expiatory sacrifices** furnished the means of removing the barrier which **sins and trespasses** had set up between the sinner and the holy God, and procured the forgiveness of sin and guilt, so that the sinner could attain once more to the unrestricted enjoyment of the covenant grace. For, provided only that the people of God drew near to their God with sacrificial gifts, in obedience to His commandments and in firm reliance upon His word, which had connected **the forgiveness of sin, strength for sanctification, and the peace of fellowship with Him**, with these manifestations of their piety, the offerers would receive in truth the blessings promised them by the Lord.

Nevertheless these sacrifices could not make those who drew near to God with them and in them “perfect as pertaining to the conscience” (Heb. ix. 9, x. 1), because the blood of bulls and of goats could not possibly take away sin (Heb. X. 4). **The forgiveness of sin which the atoning sacrifices procured, was only a forbearance of sins through the forbearance of God (Rom. iii. 25, 26), in anticipation of the true sacrifice of Christ, of which the animal sacrifices were only a type**, and by which the justice of God is satisfied, and the way opened for the full forgiveness of sin and complete reconciliation with God. **So also the sanctification and fellowship** set forth by the burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, were simply a sanctification of the fellowship already established by the covenant of the law between Israel and its covenant God, **which pointed forward to the true sanctification and blessedness that grow out of the righteousness of faith, and expand through the operation of the Holy Spirit into the true righteousness and blessedness of the divine peace of reconciliation.**

The effect of the sacrifices was in harmony with the nature of the old covenant. The fellowship with God, established by this covenant, was simply a faint copy of that true and living fellowship with God, which consists in God’s dwelling in our hearts through His Spirit, transforming our spirit, soul, and body more and more into His own image and His divine nature, and making us partakers of the glory and blessedness of His divine life connected Himself with His people in the earthly sanctuary of the tabernacle and the altar of burnt-offering, yet so long as this sanctuary stood, the God who was enthroned in the most holy place was separated by the veil from His people, who could only appear before Him in the fore-court, as a proof that the sin which separates unholy man from the holy God had not yet been taken out of the way. Just as the old covenant generally was not intended to secure redemption from sin, but the law was designed to produce the knowledge of sin; so the desire for reconciliation with God was not to be truly satisfied by its sacrificial ordinances, but **a desire was to be awakened for that true sacrifice which cleanses from all sins, and the way to be prepared for the appearing of the Son of God, who would exalt the shadows of the Mosaic sacrifices into a substantial reality by giving up His own life as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and thus through the one offering of His own holy body would perfect all the manifold sacrifices of the Old Testament economy.** (Keil & Delitzsch, p.331-333).

The Chart on opposite page is from the Concordia Self-Study Bible

AC XIII. Number and Use of the Sacraments

⁷ Our opponents do not interpret the priesthood in reference to the ministry of the Word or the administration of the sacraments to others, but in reference to sacrifice, **as though the new covenant needed a priesthood like the Levitical to offer sacrifices and merit the forgiveness of sins for the people.** ⁸ We teach that **the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross** was sufficient for the sins of the whole world and that there is no need for additional sacrifices as though this were not sufficient for our sins. ⁹ Men are not justified, therefore, because of any other sacrifices, but because of this one sacrifice of Christ if they believe that it has redeemed them. **Thus priests are not called to make sacrifices that merit forgiveness of sins for the people, as in the Old Testament,** but they are called to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments to the people. ¹⁰ As the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches clearly enough, **we do not have a priesthood like the Levitical.**

APOLOGY XXIV. THE MASS, SACRIFICE, ITS NATURE AND TYPES

¹⁹ **There are two, and only two, basic types of sacrifice. One is the propitiatory sacrifice; this is a work of satisfaction for guilt and punishment that reconciles God or placates his wrath or merits the forgiveness of sins for others. The other type is the eucharistic sacrifice; this does not merit the forgiveness of sins or reconciliation, but by it those who have been reconciled give thanks or show their gratitude for the forgiveness of sins and other blessings received....**

²¹ **All the Levitical sacrifices can be classified under one or another of these heads. The Old Testament called certain sacrifices propitiatory because of what they signified and foreshadowed. They did not merit the forgiveness of sins in the sight of God, but they did on the basis of the justice of the law; thus those for whom they were offered did not have to be excluded from the commonwealth. They were accordingly called propitiatory sacrifices for sin or burnt offerings for trespasses. The eucharistic sacrifices were the oblation, the drink offerings, the thank offering, the first fruits, and the tithes.²**

²² **There has really been only one propitiatory sacrifice in the world, the death of Christ,** as the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches (10:4), “It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.”.... ²⁴ **The Levitical propitiatory sacrifices were so called only as symbols of a future offering. By analogy they were satisfactions since they gained the righteousness of the ceremonial law and prevented the exclusion of the sinner from the commonwealth. But after the revelation of the Gospel they had to stop; therefore they were not really propitiations, since the Gospel was promised in order to set forth a propitiation.**

²⁵ **The rest are eucharistic sacrifices,** called “sacrifices of praise”: the proclamation of the Gospel, faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, the afflictions of the saints, yes, all the good works of the saints. These sacrifices are not satisfactions on behalf of those who bring them, nor can they be transferred to merit the forgiveness of sins or reconciliation for others *ex opere operato*. Those who bring them are already reconciled. ²⁶ **The sacrifices of the New Testament are of this type,** as Peter teaches in 1 Pet. 2:5, “A holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices.” Spiritual sacrifices are contrasted not only with the sacrifices of cattle but also with human works offered *ex opere operato*, for “spiritual” refers to the operation of the Holy Spirit within us.... ²⁷ **In short, the worship of the New Testament is spiritual; it is the righteousness of faith in the heart and the fruits of faith. Thus it abrogates Levitical worship. And Ps. 116:17, “I will offer to thee sacrifices of thanksgiving and call on the name of the Lord.” Prayer is called a sacrifice of thanksgiving.**

³⁰ ...With the abrogation of Levitical worship, the New Testament teaches that there should be a new and pure sacrifice; this is faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, and proclamation of the Gospel, suffering because of the Gospel, etc.

³¹ About such sacrifices **Malachi says (1:11)**, “From the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering.” Our opponents misinterpret this passage and apply it to the Mass, and for this they quote patristic authority. The answer is easy. They say, first, that the name of the Lord will be great. **This takes place through the proclamation of the Gospel, which makes known the name of Christ and the Father’s mercy promised in Christ. The proclamation of the Gospel produces faith in those who accept it. They call upon God, they give thanks to God, they bear afflictions in confession, they do good works for the glory of Christ. This is how the name of the Lord becomes great among the nations.... The New Testament requires sacrifices of the heart, not the ceremonial sacrifices for sin offered by a Levitical priesthood.**

³⁵ They also refer to **the daily sacrifice**: as there was a daily sacrifice in the Old Testament, so the Mass ought to be the daily sacrifice of the New Testament. Our opponents will really achieve something if we let them defeat us with allegories, but it is evident that allegory does not prove or establish anything. **We are perfectly willing for the Mass to be understood as a daily sacrifice, provided this means the whole Mass, the ceremony and also the proclamation of the Gospel, faith, prayer, and thanksgiving. Taken together, these are the daily sacrifice of the New Testament; the ceremony was instituted because of them and ought not to be separated from them.** Therefore Paul says (1 Cor. 11:26), “As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death.”...

³⁶ This analogy symbolizes not only the ceremony but the proclamation of the Gospel. **Num. 28:4ff. lists three parts of this daily sacrifice, the burning of the lamb, the drink offering, and the offering of flour.** The Old Testament had pictures or shadows of what was to come; thus **this depicted Christ and the whole worship of the New Testament.**

The burning of the lamb symbolizes the death of Christ.

The drink offering symbolizes the sprinkling, that is, the sanctifying of believers throughout the world with the blood of the lamb, by the proclamation of the Gospel, as Peter says (1 Pet. 1:2); “Sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood.”

The offering of flour symbolizes faith, prayer, and thanksgiving in the heart. ³⁷ Therefore, as we discern the shadow in the Old Testament, so in the New we should look for what it represents and not for another symbol that seems to be a sacrifice.

³⁸ Although the ceremony is a memorial of the death of Christ, therefore, it is not the daily sacrifice by itself; **the commemoration is the real daily sacrifice, the proclamation of the faith which truly believes that by the death of Christ God has been reconciled.** There must be **a drink offering**, namely, **the effect of the proclamation**, as we are sanctified, put to death, and made alive when the Gospel sprinkles us with the blood of Christ. There must also be **an offering in thanksgiving, confession, and affliction.**

³⁹ With the rejection of the idea that ceremonies work *ex opere operato*, we can see that their real meaning is **spiritual worship and the daily sacrifice of the heart**, for in the New Testament we should look for the substance of things, for the Holy Spirit who puts us to death and makes us alive. ⁵² ...**The services of the Mass and the rest of the papal order are nothing but a misinterpretation of the Levitical order....**