

THE OFFERINGS (4)

—H. L. Heijkoop

Leviticus 16:1-10

In this passage we have an entirely new thought, one connected with atonement. So far we saw more of what answered to the need of man; here, we see what is required *for God*.

In Genesis 3 we saw that when Adam and Eve sinned, they not only became sinners, but above all, they dishonoured God. They believed Satan who had said that God was lying and that He did not love man because He denied them what they had a right to have. In this way Adam and Eve robbed God of His glory. When, therefore, man is to be brought into contact with God, the first question is, can God accept man? *God's* requirements for this acceptance are of prime importance. What is required for man is secondary.

2 Corinthians 5:20 gives us the precious Gospel. God invites man and announces to him, "Be reconciled to Me!" What a glorious thought that is: out of His high heaven, God prays sinful man to be reconciled with Him. What grace! But this only became possible after the Lord Jesus accomplished the work of atonement, giving God complete satisfaction on behalf of man. This great fact is shown us in Leviticus 16.

We do not find this in Genesis; that was impossible. Whatever good may be found in Genesis, there isn't a redeemed people until Exodus 12 where we find the slain Lamb by Whose blood we have been brought into safety from the judgment of God. Then in Exodus 14, we see the children of Israel going through the Red Sea. The Red Sea is also a picture of the death of Christ. On the basis of the work of the Lord Jesus we have part in the death of Christ. God sees us as having died with Christ. We are thus no longer subjected to the power of Satan, the prince of this world. We occupy the position of Romans 5:1, "Therefore having been justified on the principle of faith, we have peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Only then can we understand God's thoughts.

God has revealed all His thoughts in His Word. In 1 Corinthians 2:11 and the following verses, we see that these are spiritual thoughts which the natural man cannot understand. Only spiritual men can understand them. That is an important principle. An unbeliever may spend his lifetime studying the Word of God and he will not understand *anything* of it. There are only two things he can grasp. One is that God is holy and righteous and thus must judge the sinner. The other is that he himself is a sinner. More he cannot understand. But as soon as someone is born again and has peace with God, he is free and can occupy himself with things that concern God. The reason is that the Holy Spirit indwells him and gives him the capacity to understand the thoughts of God. We see the distinction from the Old-Testament believers in 1 John 2:18 and the following verses. There we find the children in Christ, those who only recently found peace with God. To them it is said, "Ye have the unction (anointing) from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (v. 20). Not only had they received new life, but more than that, the Holy Spirit had come to dwell in them so they could understand God's thoughts.

We see this in type in Exodus 12 and 13, but even more at the end of that book. After God had redeemed Israel out of Egypt, He led them to Mount Horeb where He declared them to be His people and gave them the tabernacle. In the last chapter we read that God came to dwell in the midst of His people, although only Moses and Aaron ever had access to the holy-of-holies where He dwelt. They were His people, and as far as they were concerned, He was their God. Then He began to make His thoughts known to them.

Here in Leviticus 16 we do not have the Gospel as it is preached to unbelievers, but as preached to *believers* so that they may see the greatness of their salvation, understand what a price has been paid for their redemption, see how far the results of the work on the cross go, and see how they can have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

In the first verse we clearly see what was the condition of the children of Israel. Israel was the chosen people of God; He had separated them from the men of earth. God had chosen Levi from among Israel, and Aaron and his house from among the sons of Levi. They alone were allowed to enter the holy place. So, they were holy people on earth, entirely separated unto God. But the first time that two of these people approached God, they died. I do not want to go into detail as to the immediate reasons for this, but in verse 2 we see that it caused God to say, "Speak unto Aaron thy brother that he come not at all times into the sanctuary." Aaron was the only man who was entirely separated unto God; yet under normal conditions even he could not enter the holy-of-holies without dying.

That showed man's condition. Yet, it was God's desire that man could approach Him, and that was the purpose of the work of the Lord Jesus. In 1 Peter 3:18 we read, "Christ indeed has once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." We find the same thing in Hebrews 10:19 and the following verses. The way to God has now been opened and we are urged to enter. In Leviticus 16, the main thought is not that man will fall under the judgment, but that man can approach God, not as in Eden where *God* came to man. Man may approach before God's throne but we see that this is impossible for the natural man. When Aaron's sons entered, they died, and Aaron would also have died if he had entered.

From verse 3 onward we have the manner in which it was possible for Aaron to enter, "In this manner shall Aaron come into the sanctuary: with a young bullock for a sin-offering and a ram for a burnt-offering." So, he could enter only with an offering. In verse 5 it says that he had to take two bucks of the goats for the assembly of the children of Israel, and in verse 6 that the bullock was for him and his house. Further on, we see that he had to enter twice with blood: once with the blood of the bullock for himself and his house and once with the blood of the buck for the house of Israel. Two sides of the work of the Lord Jesus are presented to us in this. When it concerns Aaron and his house, Hebrews 3:6 says that we who belong to the house of God are the house of Aaron. There we are not viewed as the Assembly but as a house of priests connected with Him, the great High Priest, as Peter writes in 1 Peter 2:5. So we see that an offering had to be brought for Aaron and his house, and that there had to be an offering for Israel as well.

Of course, it all refers to one offering, to the work of the Lord Jesus which is the basis for *our* salvation and of all the blessings for Israel. But the results for us are not the same as those for *Israel*. This explains the difference we observe here. We notice that the offering for us is greater: a bullock; for the people there are but two bucks of the goats. The significance of the work of the Lord Jesus is for us much greater than for Israel. Certainly, all blessings for Israel will be the outflow of this work, but we have received much more. It is true that God will make a new covenant with Israel that will contain glorious blessings. The Word of God tells us that these same blessings will be our portion, but we will receive much more than these! We have become children of God; that will never be the part of Israel. We have the Holy Spirit indwelling; Israel will never possess Him in this manner. We may even now enter the sanctuary, something Israel will never be able to do. At the end of the book of Ezekiel we find a description of the Millennium: even then the priest will not be allowed to enter the holy-of-holies. To us, the Father's house is open, the Lord Jesus has prepared a place for us there and we will dwell there throughout eternity, but this will not be for Israel. So we see that our portion is greater than Israel's and I believe that is what is presented to us in the greater offering for Aaron.

We must be reminded that Aaron is a type of Christ as Man. What is said in Hebrews 9:7 is true for Aaron personally: he was not allowed to enter the holy-of-holies without blood when he had to make atonement for himself. But this is not true for Christ, so in this aspect Aaron is not a type of Christ. Therefore, in Leviticus 16:12 Aaron first enters into the most holy place without blood but with the censer with incense, "that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat... that he die not." In this Aaron is a type of Christ in the excellency of His Person, which is unique and which when tested by the fire of judgment, reveals all His perfections. After that, Aaron takes the blood (v. 13) and sprinkles it inside the veil where the smell of the burnt incense was already present. In this he is a type of Christ Who enters with His blood *for others* to make atonement, preceded, so to say, by the proven excellency of His Person. However, in our verses, Aaron must bring an offering for himself and for his house in which we see Christ connected with us. Therefore it says, "for himself and for his house" (v. 6). This thought is very significant: Christ makes Himself one with us, which gives to us also the character of priests and explains why there are one bullock and two bucks of the goats. The two bucks were for the people of Israel. The first one was slain and its blood brought into the sanctuary. Afterwards, the sins of the people were laid and confessed on the second one which was subsequently sent into the desert. In this we find both sides of the work of the Lord Jesus. The first buck of the goats signified what was for God — the blood carried into the holy-of-holies. The second one displayed what was for the people — their sins were confessed and laid on its head, and then it was sent away into the wilderness.

As far as Israel is concerned, there is a time interval between the moment at which the blood was carried into the sanctuary and the moment at which the buck of the goats is sent into the wilderness. That is also true for us personally. The blood has been brought into the sanctuary more than 1900 years ago, but I had no share in it before I confessed my sins and believed in the Lord Jesus. But when believers are seen as a whole, as a house of priests, there is no such time interval. From the moment the Lord Jesus finished the work, they (as a whole) share with Him in it. This is not the case with Israel nationally. Only when the Lord returns from heaven will what is presented by the second buck of the goats be fulfilled for the people, and will the people have part in the accomplished work.

We find a type of this in Leviticus 9. Offerings are brought, Moses and Aaron together enter the sanctuary, and only when they come out do the people begin to shout. It is a type of Israel's position. After the Lord Jesus had finished the work, He entered the sanctuary. But Israel as a whole doesn't see Him! As a nation they do not know that God has accepted His

work. Since the cross, the priests have said, "God has forsaken Him." When will they see that the work is finished? When He returns from heaven to the mount of Olives, then they will see that God has accepted His work.

In Leviticus 16 we see Aaron entering the sanctuary with the blood. What would have happened if God had not accepted the offering? Aaron would have died! He would never have come out again. The children of Israel saw him enter, and when they saw him come out again, they knew that God had accepted the offering. So it is today for Israel; none of those who belong to the faithful remnant of Israel will know his sins to be forgiven before he sees the Lord Jesus. Only then will they speak the words of Isaiah 53. That chapter contains the language of the faithful remnant after they have seen the Lord Jesus coming out of heaven.

But how can it be that it is not the same for us? That has to do with our position as priests. To accomplish the service, Aaron's sons had to enter the holy place, although they were not allowed to enter the holy-of-holies. As far as we are concerned, the holy place and the holy-of-holies are one because the veil is rent. When we enter the sanctuary, we enter the holy-of-holies. We see the blood on the mercy-seat, proof of the finished work of the Lord Jesus and of God's acceptance of the work, and we see "Aaron" there, the Lord Jesus! Further, after the Lord Jesus was taken up into glory, God sent His Holy Spirit, and that is proof that God has been completely satisfied with the work of the Lord Jesus. In John 16 the Lord said that the Holy Spirit would speak of His glory. When the Holy Spirit declares today that the Lord Jesus is seated and glorified at the right hand of God, we know that God has accepted His offering, and on that basis we can have peace with God. We know that God has found complete satisfaction in the work of the Lord Jesus, and therefore, we may enter with full assurance of faith into the sanctuary.

That is the difference between the house of Aaron and the people of Israel. There is however more to be discerned, something that did not occur in any of the previous types. That is the *mediating* of the priest. Until tabernacle times, man brought an offering. From then on, a priest did it for man. That is a precious thought. In Genesis 8 we saw that the burnt-offering was connected with the altar and that the altar sanctified the offering. The Lord Jesus is the altar; His glorious Person increases the value of the work. But here we do not see an altar. When a true sin-offering is in view, there is no altar. By the term "a true sin-offering" I mean one of which the blood is brought into the sanctuary. With such an offering there is no altar mentioned but a priest. When the sin-offering is mentioned, the judgment of God over sin is contemplated. The Lord Jesus bore our sins in His body on the tree, and has been made sin for us: that cannot be connected with the altar. Sin is a terrible thing to God. He does not find anything pleasing in it. God can only act against sin in judgment. Therefore we do not find an altar, but a priest, who is also a type of the Lord Jesus.

In Hebrews 2:17 it says, "Wherefore it behoved Him in all things to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in the things relating to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." When we read this, we notice that the subject matter concerns a special activity of the high priest. In Exodus 28 we find the usual clothes of the high priest which speak of the heavenly glory: blue, fine linen, gold, precious stones; they were called the garments for glory and honour. But he does not wear these in Leviticus 16. In Hebrews 8:1-4 we find that the Lord Jesus became a High Priest after He entered heaven. When He had entered there, God declared Him to be High Priest (Heb. 5:6-10). After He finished the work on earth, the normal service of the Lord Jesus as Priest is a service in heaven and not on the earth. Yet, in Hebrews 2:17 we see that He nevertheless accomplished high-priestly work on earth. But that was only once, and it can never be repeated. He brought the sacrifice "once for all" and that, one sacrifice was sufficient.

Here in Leviticus 16 we have the exception to the high priest's usual clothes: he wore special garments which he alone wore once a year. This shows us how special this event was. Verse 4 describes his garments: "A holy linen vest shall he put on, and linen trousers shall be upon his flesh, and he shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments." They are all linen clothes. Moreover, he had to wash himself first.

He had to be an accurate picture of the Lord Jesus: every spot had to be removed because he was about to appear in the presence of God where the throne of God stood. We know that the ark was the throne of God and that the cherubim were on the ark to see whether God received satisfaction. There Aaron had to appear as *representative* of the people; not as a mediator, that is the Lord Jesus today. Aaron came to God on behalf of the people, as a type of the Lord Jesus on the cross, not as the sacrifice, but as the representative of those for whom He brought the sacrifice. When 1 Peter 2:24 says that He "bore our sins in His body on the tree," we see Him as our Representative. And in Ephesians 5:25 we read that, "Christ loved the Assembly and has delivered Himself up for her." There we find Him going to the cross as our Representative to bring a sacrifice to God as such. To do this, He had to be perfect. Had the Lord committed one sin, He would not have been able to finish the work. He would have had to die for Himself. Only because He was without sin could He die for us. This is the significance of Aaron having to bathe his flesh with water so that he might be a true type of the Lord Jesus.

For the Lord Jesus it had another significance which we will see later in Leviticus 1. Ephesians 5:26 among other places teaches us that water is a type of the Word of God in its cleansing power. The Word has been fully brought to bear upon the Lord Jesus, but the water did not become dirty; it was proof that He was completely pure. Each of us needs water to be cleansed, but not the Lord.

After having washed himself, Aaron had to put on the linen garments. God's Word gives us the significance of this. Revelation 19:8 tells us that the fine linen are the righteousnesses of the saints, which means that their lives are practically in agreement with God. We find this with the Lord Jesus. When He was born, God found in Him His delight. Thirty years later the heavens opened over Him and the voice of His Father said, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I have found My delight." Three years later the Father said the same thing on the mount of glorification. The Lord Jesus could say, "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him." That was the practical life of the Lord on earth. God had delight in Him, in His practical life, and that was the power of the Lord for the service which is spoken of here.

Now let us return for a moment to the time at which the high priest entered the holy-of-holies. God was there, on His throne; the God Who hates sin, Who cannot bear it, Who must judge it. And then, the high priest came and presented himself as the representative of the people, of a sinful people that deserved the judgment. But in his person, the priest was entirely according to the thoughts of God. God did not see one single spot on him; He only found that which gave Him satisfaction. What power this gave to the service that the priest was performing there! This is shown to us that we might observe how very important the *person* is who brought the offering.

To be cont'd

QUOTE

Happy are those who, through the grace of God, have their portion outside of this scene; who know that their citizenship is in heaven; and who therefore, while they, in obedience to the Word of God, are subject to the powers that be and obey magistrates, stand aloof from all political agitations and movements, expecting nothing from man's vain and futile efforts to improve the world, but wait continually for the return of the Lord.

(Zechariah the Prophet, by E. Dennet, pg. 64)

THOUGHTS ON BIBLE STUDY

—*J. de Jager*

There is a great danger that we younger ones, who may search and study the Bible, will place ourselves above the Word of God. We may think to be able to lay hold of the truths of God through our own discernment and understanding. If we are honest we will have to admit that, in spite of all our study, we do not really advance; our *hearts* remain cold for the most precious truths and frequently we even experience that our mind refuses to digest these truths, causing us to become thoroughly confused.

The cause of all this is found in our own ego, we are seeking ourselves, even on the spiritual terrain. This forms a hindrance to the Spirit of God to clearly display precious truth and the Person of the Lord to us, for this is the task of the Spirit: to display the honour and glory of the Lord Jesus.

The present-day demand for secular studies and development which is put upon us is one reason why we so often overrate *our* understanding and discernment. Because of this, although often unnoticed, the thought establishes itself with us that we can study the Bible as any other book.

Let us be on guard against this! Let us put ourselves under the discipline and guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that the Word of God may speak to our hearts and consciences, thereby doing His work in us to the honour of God and our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

QUOTE

The aspects of the suffering of Christ are very clearly distinguished in the Psalms. When the Messiah suffers under the hand of God, as in Psalm 22, nothing but grace flows out to all around; but when He is seen suffering from the hands of

men, as in Psalm 69, the consequence is sure and certain judgment. It must never be forgotten that atonement lies in what He suffered from the hands of God."

(Zechariah the Prophet, by E. Dennet, pg. 138, 139)