

**THE OFFERINGS (11)**

—H. L. Heijkoop

*Leviticus 6:8-13*

Here we have the *law* of the burnt-offerings. In the first chapter we saw the general instructions for it, but in these verses we find detailed instructions to be followed by those who want to bring a burnt offering. The law was given to Aaron and his sons (v. 9), while chapter one is given for the people. So everyone was allowed to bring a freewill burnt-offering to God, but here is reference to Aaron and his sons. The divine principles relating to our Sunday-morning service have been entrusted to the Lord and to those who are priests.

We already saw that the term "sons of Aaron" has reference to the male children who were actually allowed to perform the priestly service. They were daily found in the presence of the Lord, so they were able to judge everything according to His thoughts. To them the Lord gives the instruction which must be followed during the service. This is a general principle in the Word of God. In Numbers 10 we have the silver trumpets, through which Moses could speak to the entire nation. But it is explicitly said that the *priests* had to blow on them. That means that Moses, as a type of the Lord Jesus, gave the Word of God with authority, but usually he did so by means of the priests; that is to say through those who were truly in fellowship with him and who first of all were able to understand his thoughts. So they were the ones who performed the most important service, as we saw in chapter 1: all tasks that required insight had to be performed by the priest. It is good that we think of this when reading these verses.

The first thing is that this burnt-offering "shall be on the hearth of the altar all night unto the morning... kept burning on it" (v. 9). That is approximately the same thought as in Exodus 29. There it says that every day, in the morning and in the evening, the burnt-offering must be brought. It was also brought in the evening, so that even during the night the odor of the burnt-offering could rise to God. Prophetically this speaks of the significance of the work of the Lord Jesus for ourselves and for Israel. We live in the night: when the Lord Jesus was betrayed, it was night (John 13:30). Later, the day will dawn when the Lord Jesus will return as the Sun of Righteousness, a day specialty for Israel. True, the burnt-offering was for the day: only on the basis of the work of the Lord Jesus will Israel be blessed; but the burnt offering was also for the night. Once more: only on the basis of the work of the Lord Jesus will we receive our blessings.

Here, however, it is emphasized that the burnt-offering had to be upon the hearth *the whole night*. This is a beautiful thought. It speaks of the burnt offering that *we* bring. It is clear that *God* always sees the work of the Lord Jesus. If there were just one little moment in which He could not see it, there would not be any blessing for us. Now, because it speaks here of the burnt offerings that *we* bring, the Word of God says regarding them, that the fire had to be kept burning *the entire night*. It is, I believe, approximately the same thought as expressed in Numbers 28, where it says that God desires to receive sacrifices from this cursed earth, this earth which is under a curse, a desert in which God is rejected. And yet He desires fruit from this earth! That we see here. Even when it is night upon earth, God desires that the odor of the burnt-offering rises to Him. What a precious thought, more particularly so when we think here of our sacrifices. In the entire period during which the Lord Jesus is rejected, God desires that His own bring burnt-offerings at all times, that the sweet smelling savor of them may rise to Him, not a savor as once rose from the cross, but as it ascends from a burnt-offering brought to Him. We have seen what this means: that we regard the Lord Jesus as the Burnt-Offering, and that we bring to God as a sacrifice, the things we have found in Him.

In Psalm 134 we have the same thought. There is an order in these three Psalms: in Psalm 132 we have the *place* of meeting; in Psalm 133:1 we read, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to  *dwell together in unity*" and in Psalm 134, the *service* that they perform. There we read in the first verse, "Behold, bless Jehovah, all ye servants of Jehovah, who by night stand in the house of Jehovah." Many do not understand why it says "by night," but we can understand it when we see the teaching of the New Testament. That night continues until the last verse of Psalm 134, where we find the morning, "Jehovah, the maker of heavens and earth, bless thee out of Zion." This concludes the songs of degrees.

In Leviticus 6 we read of the burnt-offering, "This, the burnt-offering, shall be on the hearth of the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it" (v. 9). That is the service of the priests; this is first of all true of the Lord Jesus, for Aaron is a type of the Lord Jesus. But Aaron and his sons are both mentioned, and it is therefore also a duty of the sons of Aaron. What a wonderful service does the Lord ask us to perform! We must see to it that during the

entire time of the Lord Jesus' rejection, the odor of the burnt-offering rises to God, because we, the believers, bring this sacrifice to God.

When we think of the sin-offering, we see different things. The sin-offering is needed for our salvation, but it was brought only once a year and we do not find that it was repeated. Perhaps it was repeated (Lev. 4-5) when someone had sinned, but there is never any mention of a *freewill* sin-offering. Here, however, when the burnt-offering is mentioned, God expects our hearts to be generous and bring *continual* burnt-offerings. That is His desire! This is a serious thought! When we came for the first time to God we saw the Lord Jesus as the sin-offering, for we were occupied with *our* needs. But once we have truly learned to know the Lord Jesus, God desires that we will be occupied with the Lord as the burnt-offering. Although we will never forget His work for our sins, we have nevertheless seen that a sin offering does not come upon the altar, but that God desires a special burnt-offering. And our service consists ever again in this, that we will bring a burnt-offering, during the entire period of the Lord Jesus' rejection, so that a sweet-smelling odor of it may rise up to Him.

The fire of the altar had to be kept burning. The fire is a type of God's holiness, which searches and tests, so that, applied to the Lord Jesus on the cross and seen as burnt-offering, only a sweet odor would rise. That is the service we have: to take care that the fire remains always burning, which means that we must look back to the cross to observe how the fire searched the Lord Jesus, and that only a sweet odor rose up to God.

This does not infer in the least that the work would not be complete. In verse 10 we find that it *is* finished. We do so in the realization that the work is finished and that God has been completely glorified. We know that we do not find anything in the Lord Jesus that is not good, and we are well aware that all in Him is perfect. With this knowledge we contemplate again and again the burnt-offering to see how perfect all in Him is and to express this before God. But, as I said, we do that in the awareness that the work is finished. This we have in verse 10, "And the priest shall put on his linen raiment, and his linen breeches shall he put on his flesh, and take up the ashes to which the fire has consumed the burnt-offering on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar."

So the priest had to be occupied with the ashes, but for this he had to put on his linen raiment and linen breeches, which were the clothes he wore upon the Day of Atonement. This means that, when we are occupied in this way with the Lord, we must possess practical righteousness, of which the linen speaks (Revelation 19:8). But how could one always be in the presence of the burnt offering and abide in the odor of it? A priest who is always near the altar and the burnt-offering lives in that odor, and we know that the burnt-offering speaks of the perfect consecration of the Lord to God, even unto death — how could one be occupied with these things and be practically unclean?

The ashes speak of a work finished unto death! There are no ashes until all has been consumed by the fire. This must be the prominent thought in our hearts: Christ has died, and although He died as the burnt-offering to the glory of God, it was in the place where He died for us, where God had to bring an end to the natural man. We should never forget that we have died with Christ, that the old man has been judged and that we should live in the power of the resurrection.

But this has consequences for our practical lives. We may stand at the altar, but besides that, we have another service. The brazen altar stood in the wilderness, forming a part of the tabernacle. The court of the tabernacle is a type of the earth but of the earth as the place where the cross has been erected. In Hebrews 13:10-13 we read that we must be either in the Holy of Holies or outside the camp. And when we meet in the assembly to bring sacrifices at the Lord's Table — for the Lord's Table is the brazen altar — we see what character we ought to have when we are there. We should be aware that the work is finished, realizing that we have died with Christ, and that the old man has no place there; and thus we bring our burnt-offerings.

However, we do not always remain there; we must also go out into the world where we must render our testimony. There we no longer wear the same clothes as in the sanctuary: "And he shall put off his garments, and put on other garments and carry forth the ashes without the camp unto a clean place" (v. 11). That is the second part of our service, towards the outside. Outside, we must be outside the camp, in a clean place, outside the entire ecclesiastical terrain and every human organization. There we must bring the ashes, which testify of the finished work, not as sin-offering, but as burnt-offering. And although this means the end of the human nature, it speaks at the same time of a complete consecration to God.

In verses 12 and 13, God stresses anew the fact that the fire on the altar was not allowed to go out: "The fire upon the altar shall be kept burning on it: it shall not be put out; and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt-offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace-offerings. A continual fire shall be kept burning on the altar: it shall never go out." I believe that this also expresses what the work meant for Israel. Israel rejected the Lord Jesus and judgment came upon His people. But how do we explain that Israel has not been consumed and that we may know that it has a glorious future in store? It is because the burnt-offering causes a sweet odor to rise up to God.

We read in John 11:51 that the Lord was to die for the entire nation, but also to gather together into one the children of God who were scattered abroad. In the first place He died for the nation. We saw the same thing in Leviticus 16: the sin-offering was not only brought for Aaron and his house, but also for the nation. We find the same thought in Hebrews 2:17, "Wherefore it behooved Him in all things to be made like to His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things relating to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." Christ had to die for the sins of the people. Because the odor of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus rises up to God, God can bear the people, keeping them; later He will bring Israel into the blessings. Naturally the individuals must repent, only converted and born-again Jews will enter the Millennium, all unbelieving ones will be judged (Rom. 11:26, 27). But today God bears the people on the basis of the burnt-offering.

Let us proceed with the service of the priest. He had to maintain the fire and every morning to burn wood upon it and to lay the burnt-offering in order upon it. It is the same thing as we found in the first chapter, but here we see that it was to be done continually. He had to burn the wood. We have already seen that the wood speaks of the human nature, and as far as the human nature is concerned, it can only be consumed by the fire. The new man, however, has also a nature, the new nature which we have received. The priest has to occupy himself with it. He must keep the hearts warm for the Lord in his priestly service for the believers, so that the Holy Spirit can use them for the burnt-offering. Let us recall the two disciples on their way to Emmaus in Luke 24. The Lord addressed them and in speaking He began the work of the priest. They were sad and had no appreciation for His wonderful work. But after the Lord had spoken with them about Himself, they could say, "Was not our heart burning in us as He spoke to us on the way, and as He opened the Scriptures to us?" I believe this to be an example of what we find here, to warm the affections, so that the believers are enabled to bring burnt-offerings.

Then burnt-offerings are *brought* and the priests must lay them in order. In chapter 1 we saw what that meant: the pieces thereof have to be laid in their place. The burnt-offering was divided into its pieces and these were laid in order on the altar, so that the priest could present to God all the inward perfections of the Lord in their proper connection: His love had to be seen, His righteousness had to be observed, His holiness, the wisdom which He revealed along His way, the power with which He accomplished the work, and His complete consecration. That is the work of the priest. Only *he* is able to do this who has been thoroughly occupied with the work of the Lord Jesus, who has truly divided the burnt-offering in its pieces and has looked them over in worship.

After this we read that the priest had to burn the fat of the peace-offering on the fire. We have not yet looked at the peace-offering; it represents the work of the Lord Jesus as the basis for our fellowship with God; it represents the cross of the Lord as the object of our fellowship with God. Through the cross of the Lord Jesus, God has been completely glorified and He says, "There I am thoroughly satisfied." And our hearts say, "Through this work we have been completely saved." When we think of this, our hearts are filled with joy. That is the fellowship: our having the same feeling as the Father. And here the fat is mentioned — that part of the peace-offering that was particularly meant for God. In Leviticus 3:11 and 16 it is called the "food" of God. Isn't it beautiful that it is referred to in connection with the burnt offering? We find the law of the peace-offering in chapter 7, but when the burnt-offering is described its relationship to the peace-offering is shown. That which we bring to God as a burnt-offering, desiring that the odor of it may ascend to God, is what God calls His food. What a wonderful thought! What we offer to God, He receives as food.

How important this is for God is seen in verse 13, where we read for the third time, "a continual fire shall be kept burning on the altar: it shall never go out." What a wonderful service have we received, but also what responsibility!

*To be cont'd.*

#### **GOD'S PURPOSE (4)**

— *J. van Dijk*

We have seen so far that God had in mind to have Christ as Head of all things given to the Assembly. This is the hidden wisdom which God had pre-determined before the ages for our glory (1 Corinthians 2:7). That God's purposes are immutable can be seen from Hebrews 6:17: "God willing to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the unchangeableness of His purpose intervened with an oath." It is not just that God's purpose is an immutable certainty but God also wants the truth of it to be brought to the attention of the heirs of promise. God, by claiming these things with an oath, says as it were, "Pay attention, this is most important, My purposes are unchangeable."

Now it is perhaps good to look at the manner in which God has accomplished His purpose. If God were to bring in men over whom Christ could be the Head and amongst whom He could be the firstborn, it was first of all necessary that there would be a creation. For this reason we read in Ephesians 3:9, 10 that, "God has created all things in order that..." But besides this, there had to be a basis for God to give eternal life to created men. And therefore we read in 1 Peter 1:20, "A Lamb... Christ, foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world." Here we find Christ prepared to enter into His creation to do all that God required to bring about His purpose. If man were to receive Christ as His life, to receive eternal life, it was necessary for the Son of God to become like man. Since God had in view that day in which Christ would say, "Behold I and the children which God has given Me," it was necessary that He took part of blood and flesh (Hebrews 2:13-14); this was all foreknown with God.

But after God had created man, Satan came in and seemingly destroyed every possibility for God to achieve the end He had in view. Satan deceived man, man fell and became the enemy of God, a child of wrath rather than a child of God. And then...? We know what a great work the Lord Jesus had to do! What must it have meant for Him to take part of blood and flesh and He was not only found in figure as a man, but He also humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross. So great was the desire of God, so great the desire of the Lord Jesus to see God's purpose fulfilled, that nothing insurmountable could be laid in the way. Christ Himself loved the Assembly and delivered Himself up for it. Yes, to overcome the consequences of man's fall, Christ had to go into death, He had to carry the sins of many, He had to be made sin for us, so that we who believe could nevertheless be called the children of God. The path gone by Christ became the means whereby God could fulfill His purpose.

Because Christ accomplished this work, we read in Ephesians 1:21-23 that God has given the resurrected Christ as "Head over all things to the Assembly which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all." This verse brings out the closeness of the relationship we have been brought into, the importance of the Assembly, without which Christ is not complete. This idea goes far beyond what man could ever think of. What a grace, what a wonder of God's purpose, that God should consider the Assembly to be what completes Christ. Perhaps there is a way in which we can somewhat understand a remark like this. Isn't it common among us that the trophy one has obtained in victory is really that which crowns the victor and expresses his glory? Remove the trophy obtained at great effort by the conqueror and you remove the glory that is attached to his victory, it is the trophy that sets him off as the conqueror. Looking at it this way we can in a weak measure enter into the words which God expresses here concerning Christ.

We have seen that to God this relationship is important and how the glory of Christ is completely interwoven with the result of the work that He has accomplished. We have considered the value of Colossians 1:18 where Christ is presented as the Head of the body, the firstborn from among the dead so that He might have the first place in all things. When we look at this, do we not desire to give expression to these things even now? One thing is certain, *God* desires that *today* expression is given to the Headship of Christ and God has given to those who believe two areas in which they may give expression to that beautiful relationship: Christ, Head of the Church.

The first area we find in a verse we have already quoted, "God created all things in order that now... might be made known... by the Assembly the all various wisdom of God." (Ephesians 3:9, 10). What is the most important feature of the all-various wisdom of God? As we have seen, it is that He would head up all things in the Christ, that Christ would be Head of the Assembly and the firstborn among many brethren. God expects us as Assembly to make known the Headship of Christ. To the question, "How can we give expression to His Headship?" some might answer, "Well, since we confess Him to be Head and since we belong to the Church, we give expression to His Headship, don't we?" But let us observe that concerning His Lordship, the Lord Himself says, "Not everyone who *says*, 'Lord, Lord...'" Doesn't the same hold true for His Headship? The question is not whether we *say*, "He is Head," but whether we act in agreement with His Headship.

For example, concerning His Lordship we could always *say* that we confess Him to be Lord, that God made Him Lord and we know He is Lord, and then turn around and live our daily life without practically showing that Christ is our Lord. I hope there will be no one among the readers (at least among those who truly know Christ as their personal Savior) who would consider this a genuine expression of the Lordship of Christ. But doesn't the same hold true for His Headship? Are we really giving due place to Christ as Head when we only confess and *claim* Him to be Head of the Assembly? Should it not also be demonstrated in our practical, collective behaviour?

So we return to the question: "How can we give practical expression to His Headship?" I would suggest that when Christ gives instructions in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, that He addresses us there in His capacity as Head. From Him flow the instructions in His Word; His thoughts for the practical operation of the Assembly are laid down in these verses. We may well ask ourselves, "Do we indeed practice these things whenever we are together: Each one of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation... Let your women be silent in the assemblies?" These instructions are given by our Head. If we follow them, we can indeed say that we honor Him as Head.

I have little desire to enter into the controversies of our day, since I rather look at the positive instructions of God's Word. Yet it seems necessary to deal with one objection we often hear. By many it is contended that the instructions in these verses were valid only in the days when Paul wrote this epistle. I like to observe that such comments are an affront to God. It is very serious to say such things. Any *man* would be capable to separate instructions he writes down for long-time validity from those he intends to be valid for just a short interval. Any *man* would take great care to separate such things. Yet, remarks similar to the one above infer that our God was not able to do this, that He has confused us with short-term instructions intermingled with some permanent ones. This really becomes a question of the authority of the Word of God. Once we say that some part of Scripture was only valid for a limited time — without having in the Word itself any indication that it was indeed meant for a limited time — we have removed all authority from God's Word; for then we must sit down and determine for ourselves which pages are for today and which are not. We would become judges as to what applies to us and what does not; we would judge God's Word, rather than God's Word us and our activities. This is so serious that I thought it well to bring it to the attention of our readers.

But let us return to our subject. Only if we follow God's Word and the instructions contained in it, do we really give Christ the place as Head.

I would like to ask each one of our readers to prayerfully consider whether or not today's Christianity, be it fundamental or liberal, has not to a large extent (or even entirely) removed Christ as Head by the many practices which at best are based on human expedience or tradition. Search the Word prayerfully on this point, its importance is evidenced by what we have shown before. God wants the Assembly *now* to give demonstration of His wisdom: Christ as Head of the Assembly amongst His brethren, He through the Spirit leading the Assembly in worship, prayer and ministry, using whomsoever (i.e. the gifts He has given — See 1 Corinthians 12) He as Head chooses for each particular occasion.

*To be cont'd*

## **OUR STOREHOUSE OF TREASURES**

—R. W. Balder<sup>1</sup>

*"For this reason every scribe disciplined to the kingdom of the heavens is like a man that is a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old" (Matthew 13:52).*

When we consider this verse, we find the key word to be *treasure* or *storehouse* — anything of value that is stored up. The Bible uses this word to describe material as well as spiritual objects. For instance the word *treasure* is used in Genesis 43:23, where Joseph's steward says to the brethren: "Peace be to you, fear not, your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure." Joseph, the greatest economist of Biblical times, was a type of the Lord. Here we see how his steward used the word *treasure* in a material way; we may however discover the spiritual meaning behind it. He was speaking about the money in the sacks of the brethren, but spiritually this remark refers to the covenant God once made with Abraham (Genesis 17) and later confirmed to Isaac: "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and unto thy seed will I give all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves" (Genesis 26:4). This speaks of God's treasures for man.

In Exodus 19:5, God called out to Moses, "And now, if you will hearken to my voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then shall ye be My own possession out of all the peoples (a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people — KJV) for all the earth is Mine." God as well as man has treasures. We are always in God's heart as His treasure. God knows, however, that man sets his heart on material treasures rather than on spiritual ones. Man soon forgets his part of the covenant: "If you will hearken to My voice indeed, and keep My covenant..."

This ties in well with the use of the word *treasure* in the New Testament, where the Lord warns His disciples in parables, "For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be" (Luke 12:34). Yet, the apostate assembly of Laodicea is boasting of being rich, and growing rich, and having need of nothing (Revelation 3:17). They accumulated material treasures and did not know that they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked regarding spiritual treasures.

---

<sup>1</sup> *This article is an edited version of a manuscript submitted for publication by Br. Balder shortly before the Lord called him to be with Himself. Br. Balder's homecall prevented us from seeking his approval of this edited version. The Editor.*

In Deuteronomy 28:12 we find: "Jehovah will open to thee His good treasure" or *storehouse*; and in Luke 12:24, "Consider the ravens, that they sow not nor reap; which have neither storehouse nor granary and God feeds them" (Matthew 3:10). From God's side every provision is made for us to enjoy our many spiritual treasures.

In returning to our verse — "To bring out of the treasure things new and old" — we have to look for a moment at the context. We are considering a verse that is a part of the parables of the kingdom of heaven, the spiritual aspect of the Messiah, reigning as King in the hearts of those who would accept Him as their Lord and Savior. The Lord only speaks of those scribes who were well instructed in Scripture. They are here compared to a householder, who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old. The Old Testament contains the great treasure of God for His earthly people: *the promise of the Messiah*. How sad that most scribes of those days did not accept the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, they did not make use of the available storehouse full of treasures. The illustrations in the Old and New Testaments are often materialistic, e.g. gold and silver, used as examples with a spiritual meaning. So in this parable the spiritual meaning can be thought of as the abundance of God's blessings with values for the past, the present, and the future.

For today's believer the Bible, the Word of God, is also a treasure or storehouse. It contains the revelation of God's greatest treasure for the world: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." (John 3:16). When things new and old are brought out, the value of this treasure does not diminish, but will remain the same throughout eternity. The Philadelphian assembly valued its storehouse and kept His Word (Revelation 3:8, 10) and did not deny His name. And although there was only "a little power," the Lord rewards their faithfulness with an open door (for the present). He promised to keep the assembly from the hour of trial which is about to come upon the whole world (in the near future). But the greatest reward for those who have kept His Word is His promise: "I come quickly" (Revelation 3:11).