

Beauties of the Truth

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Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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The Mammon Parable, Luke 16:1-18

"Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty"
(Luke 16:6).

This parable concerns a rich man who accused his servant of wasting his goods and demanded an accounting from him. The outcome would determine the steward's future. After considering the alternatives, the steward decided to at least recoup a portion of what was owed to his master (verses 5-7). As a result, the rich man commended the steward because he had "done wisely."

A PARABLE OF THE JEWISH HARVEST

It seems curious that Matthew focuses on Second Advent parables while Luke focuses on First Advent parables. This is a reasonable assessment if indeed Paul was instrumental in encouraging Luke to write his Gospel. Paul was focusing on the changes from the Jewish Age into the Gospel Age.

For "The Mammon Parable" in Luke 16 there is "room for dispute" even in the parable's name. It has been titled the "Unrighteous (unjust) Steward;" the "Shrewd Steward;" and the "Prodigal Steward." However, all these names miss the point, because, in the end, the steward is victorious — at least in a certain sense. Jesus complimented the steward by calling him "shrewd." (See English Standard Version for verse 8.)

Context means a great deal, and in the larger context there are four parables prior to this one and one which follows. Each parable focuses on the Jewish harvest. Jesus is making several points regarding the Jewish harvest, the change from one method of dealing to another. The harvest was a tremendously significant event and in some respects affects the Gospel Age itself. This is one of the lessons of this parable.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF PARABLES

There are historic parables, focusing on past events; prophetic parables, focusing primarily on future events; and parables that teach specific concepts. This parable

fits the first two categories, as it deals with both Jewish history and the Jewish harvest. It is a lesson for Israel, which was about to be rejected.

By this parable Jesus was saying to Israel, "if you could only have done it this way, you would have been successfully transplanted from the House of Servants to the House of Sons." But, for the most part, Israel was not listening and was therefore being rejected.

From Luke 16:1 we find this parable addressed to the disciples. However, Luke 16:14 says, "And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him." So, while this parable was addressed to disciples, it was overheard by the Pharisees. This distinction is important because, in reality, it was about the Pharisees, but was also told for the benefit of the disciples. This stressed the fact that they were entering a new age, focusing on Spiritual Israel. Our Lord's message to the disciples was, "I do not want you to make the same mistake that caused Israel to lose the stewardship."

THREE REASONS FOR THE PARABLE

This parable holds three lessons. It explains: (1) the reason for Fleshly Israel's failure, (2) the change of attitude needed for those desiring to overcome where Fleshly Israel failed, and (3) the required behavior of the Saints during the Gospel Age. This third point may be the primary lesson. Jesus was saying, "I am telling you what the Jews did that was displeasing to God. I am telling the Jews

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how they can be faithful in the new age, but most of all I am telling those living in the new age not to repeat what caused Israel's failure as the stewards of God's goods."

Jesus explains the problem in Luke 16:1-2. There was a certain rich man who had a steward who was reported as squandering the rich man's possessions. He called him and said, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account for your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward."

The solution is found in Luke 16:3-7 when the steward said to himself, "What shall I do since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, I am ashamed to beg. I know what I shall do so that when I am removed from the stewardship, they will receive me into their houses."

He then met with each one of his master's debtors and began saying to the first, "How much do you owe my master?" And the debtor said, "One hundred measures of oil." And the steward said to him, "Take your bill, sit down quickly and write 50."

Then he said to another, "And how much do you owe?" The answer was "100 measures of wheat." He said to him, "Take your bill and write 80."

The master praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly.

In Luke 16:8-13 Jesus explains that the sons of this age are shrewder in relation to their own welfare than the sons of light. He adds, "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. If therefore you have not been faithful in unrighteous mammon who will entrust the true riches to you? And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon."

The Pharisees were lovers of money. They were listening to all these things and scoffed at Jesus. He said to them, "You are those who justify themselves, but God knows your heart. For that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God. The law and the prophets were proclaimed until John. Since then, the gospel of the Kingdom of God is preached and everyone is forcing his way into it, but it is easier for heaven and earth pass away than for the stroke of a letter of the law to fail" (verses 14-17).

SPIRITUAL FRUITAGE NECESSARY

The disciples needed to know why the Law Age was ending so they would not repeat the problem in the Gospel Age. Spiritual Babylon did not learn this lesson and did repeat the problem during the Gospel Age. The lesson to



"Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty."

true disciples says, "If you want to avoid the Babylonian attitude, this is what you need to learn."

The steward of the parable describes the Pharisees, the high priest, and anyone responsible for helping Israel obey the Law. Yet, the steward in this parable is fictitious. He is a character Jesus created to teach the lesson. This character represents what should have happened in those who wanted to successfully make the transition from the Jewish Age to the Gospel Age. The steward squandered his master's possessions. In other words, he wasted the lessons of the Law.

THE PRECEDING PARABLE

The parable of the unrighteous steward immediately follows the parable of the prodigal son. Jesus is engaging in a little bit of irony when he gives the prodigal son parable. Rather than the Pharisees being the ones wasteful of God's goods, the prodigal son represents the tax collectors and prostitutes who were spiritually wasteful. The parable of the unrighteous steward simply completes the story. Jesus is saying to those in charge of Israel, "You too are in the prodigal son parable. You are the elder son who resented the return of his younger brother. You are just as prodigal and wasteful, but in a different way!" There is a wonderful irony here because Jesus is now including the rulers and not merely addressing those who had abandoned the Law.

When John the Baptist saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming, he said to them, "You brood of vipers. Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matthew 3:7). Being removed from their stewardship is equivalent to John's statement that they would experience the "wrath to come." Their responsibility did not end because their stewardship was taken away. Being leaders during the Jewish harvest contains an implied question, "Did you do anything to create fruitage?" The Scribes and Pharisees probably knew that they did not bring forth fruitage, but were self-serving. Israel under the Law had been a failure. So, from the language of the parable, they could not give a good account of their stewardship since there was no fruitage from their efforts.

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?

In the parable, the steward said to himself, “What shall I do since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig. I am ashamed to beg.”

If the Pharisees had asked themselves a similar question, they would have had the opportunity to be transferred into the new age, for this would have constituted repentance. This was the very purpose of John’s baptism. But they were not repentant. They did not perceive what action was required of them. They were not as shrewd as the steward of the parable. On the other hand, the Apostle Paul did follow the example of the steward. Paul was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, but when Jesus manifested himself to Paul on the road to Damascus, he reevaluated his life. Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus may also have demonstrated the wisdom of the steward.

There is a relevant contemporary saying. “I am in too deep to dig myself out.” This describes the sentiment of the steward. Evaluating his position, he said, “I cannot dig.” For the leaders of Israel this described their inability to keep the works of the Law. “Works were not working!”

He also said, “To beg I am ashamed.” Being a beggar in Israel was a visible admission that one was not even trying to keep the Law, because if they were, the Law said they would be “blessed in basket and store” (Deuteronomy 28:5). This parable is a wake-up call that things were changing.

REPENTANCE

The marginal reading of Luke 16:4 says, “I have come to the knowledge of what I shall do.” In other words, the steward had determined a course of action. Jesus was saying, “If you were to see a reason to change your course of action, this attitude could bring you into a favorable relationship with God in the new age.” In the New Testament, houses represent covenants. The Scribes and Pharisees needed to be transferred from the House of Moses to the House of Sons. The House of Sons was

the new house that the steward wanted to be received into and he determined how that could be done. John the Baptist and Jesus helped the remnant of Israel understand and accept their need of repentance.

To demonstrate the meaning of this verse, the steward says, “I have finally acknowledged to myself what is happening. Jesus is Messiah and he is opening a new age. I am going to entirely change my old ways of doing and thinking. Then, perhaps, I will be received into the fellowship of the incoming age.”

GOD DESIRES THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW

None of us can keep the letter of the Law. But God’s desire is to the spirit of the Law. The debtors of the parable could not fully pay what they owed, but the amount they could pay represents the spirit. Hence, this is what the steward asked of them. According to Jesus, this was shrewd. In the Gospel Age, the concept of faithfulness to the spirit is what we are asked to live by. No one is expected to pay in full, but only what they are able.

The oil is the holy Spirit, or the spirit of the Law, and the lesson is this. Give your oil. Do not withhold any you have. It is the spirit of the Law that must be paid. So yes, we are let out from paying the letter of the Law. But, we are not let out from paying the spirit of the Law. The lesson here is to give all of everything we have. The Lord’s acceptance of this constitutes mercy, they give the master everything he wants, not what he deserves. That is why in Luke 16:8 the master offers praise for the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly, or “wisely” as King James translates it.

At all times we need to say, “Lord, what can I do?”

He says, “Sit down quickly, and write 50!” The spirit of this is potent and is the lesson of the Gospel. We must respond quickly and agree and pay. This is the standard of consecration. Consecration is all we have. Not all we owe!

— *Excerpted and adapted from a discourse by
Br. David Doran (May 2017)*

Nisan 16

“And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it” (Leviticus 23:11).

This text speaks of Abib 16 (which we know better as Nisan 16, the month name drawn from the Babylonian month “Nisanu,” during Israel’s captivity). Leviticus 23:5 refers to Nisan 14, when the passover lamb was to be offered. Verse 6 refers to Nisan 15, the first day of the feast of unleavened bread. Verse 7 says that that day was to



be observed as “an holy convocation,” or a day of sacred gathering of the people.

The feasts of Israel were punctuated by such days of “holy convocation.” The first and seventh, or last, day of the annual feast of unleavened bread were to be days of “holy convocation” (Leviticus 23:7, 8). The annual feast of Tabernacles began on day one, and ended with day eight, as days of “holy convocation” (Leviticus 23:36, 37).

Pentecost, day 50 counting from Nisan 16, was also a day of “holy convocation” (Leviticus 23:16, 21).

The feast of trumpets, day 1 of month seven, was “a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation” (Leviti-

cus 23:245). The Day of Atonement, on day 10 of month seven, was “an holy convocation” (Leviticus 23:27).

However, this description is missing for Nisan 16, which was designated to be for waving the first fruit of the annual harvest, unto Jehovah, as a thanksgiving and praise to Him for his goodness to Israel. Why, in this case, was the day not also designated one of “holy convocation,” inasmuch as it was so notable a day? It was not only a day of thanks for God’s goodness, it was also the first of the 50 days counting toward Pentecost.

THE ANTITYPE

The antitype of this day is even more compelling. It represents Jesus, raised from the dead, as the very first fruitage of all, in God’s Divine Plan. Paul makes this connection in 1 Corinthians 15:20. “Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.”

The crop waved before God on this day was barley, which elsewhere also represents Jesus. In Judges 7:13, a barley loaf was symbolic of Gideon, who is a picture of our Lord Jesus, and his triumph over the Midianites is a symbol of Jesus’ victory over the enemies of God.

At the feeding of the 5000, representing the nourishment of the saints from the spiritual “feeding” of the first advent, John 6:9 specifies that the bread involved was from “barley loaves,” and later in verse 51 Jesus said, “the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

The firstfruit of the barley harvest was waved before God on Nisan 16, “the morrow after the sabbath” (Leviticus 23:11) — this sabbath referring to Nisan 15, the day following the offering of the passover lamb. Jesus was offered as our passover lamb on Friday Nisan 14, he rested in the grave during the “sabbath” of Nisan 15, and was raised on the “morrow after the sabbath,” early in the morning of Sunday, Nisan 16, on the same day that the Law appointed for the waving of this firstfruit offering.

This waving was to be of “the sheaf,” that is, freshly cut barley without other preparation, baking, or mixing. Jesus was like that, freshly raised from the tomb to everlasting life, without any further preparation. This was distinct, for example, from the later offering at Pentecost of two waves loaves, baked with leaven, a picture of the Church beginning with Pentecost. For we all have leaven within us, and require processing first in order to be accepted by God. But with Jesus at his resurrection, all was perfect, clean, pure, and naturally acceptable to God without anything further.

WHY NOT A DAY OF HOLY CONVOCATION?

This heightens the question — why was this remarkable day, prefiguring the raising of Jesus from the dead, not also a day of “holy convocation”? It was perhaps an exceedingly important day not only for Jesus, and for the saints who



Waving the barley sheaf in thanks to God

would be blessed from our risen Lord, but for the entire human race.

Perhaps the reason is that in the fulfillment, no one was aware, in order to be gathered in anticipation for this glorious raising. In spite of the fact that Jesus had told them that he would be raised the third day, they did not understand his meaning. Jesus had been very direct in telling them that he would die at Jerusalem (Matthew 20:18, 19), but apparently they did not grasp that he was speaking plainly of things to happen in the then near future. They likewise did not grasp the clear words about the time of his resurrection.

Thus there was no gathering at the tomb early in the morning in anticipation. The women who came early to the site came not to celebrate, but to complete the burial arrangements. The disciples did not rise early with hope and expectation, but only later when informed that Jesus was missing.

John had outrun Peter to the tomb. Pausing at the entrance, stooping down, he observed the “linen clothes lying” (John 20:5), and “the napkin, that was about his head ... wrapped together in a place by itself” (verse 7). Then the precious realization — “he saw, and believed” (verse 8).

The day was not anticipated. None awaited the celebration. None prepared for the occasion. No “holy convocation” was assembled in joyful preparation. The most wonderful day of history came with surprise.

— Summarized from a recent service by Br. Harry Wildblood

The Trespass Offering

“He shall bring for his trespass unto Jehovah a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering: And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done ... and shall add the fifth part thereto: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him” (Leviticus 5:15,16).

There were five kinds of offerings under the Law. These are the burnt offering, meal offering, peace offering, sin offering, and trespass offering. Of these, there were three fundamental ones — the burnt offering, peace offering, and sin offering. The meal offering was of grain or flour, prepared in various ways, most often to accompany the other kinds of offerings. The trespass offering was similar to a sin offering. “As the sin offering is, so is the trespass offering: there is one law for them” (Leviticus 7:7). However, the trespass offering was distinguished somewhat from the sin offering both in the purpose for this offering, and in some particulars respecting it.

All five of these offerings were discussed in an earlier article, “The Law of the Offerings,” in the February 2011 issue of *Beauties of the Truth*, and we recommend reference to that article for various suggestions about how these offerings were distinguished from one another. The present article goes into more detail about the last of these, the Trespass Offering. This offering receives less attention than the others, because this kind offering was not included in any of the three chapters of Leviticus that are widely studied by brethren —

- Leviticus 8 (the consecration of the Priesthood)
- Leviticus 9 (the initial atonement of the Israelites)
- Leviticus 16 (the annual atonement of the Priests and the Israelites).

HOW TO MAKE THESE OFFERINGS

We find the instructions for offering all of these offerings of the Law recorded in Leviticus chapters 1 through 7. Artisans and craftsmen among the Israelites worked in concert with Bezaleel and Aholiab to fashion the parts of the Tabernacle, furnishings, and priestly garments (Exodus 31:2,6). This work would have taken a few months to accomplish, during the second half of the first year of the Israelites in the wilderness.

The completed work was brought to Moses for inspection to see that all was done in accord with the instructions Moses received from God while at Mount Sinai. “Thus was all the work of the Tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished ... And they brought the tabernacle unto Moses, the tent, and all his furniture, his taches, his boards, his bars, and his pillars, and his sockets, and the covering of rams’ skins dyed red, and the covering of

badgers’ skins¹ ... And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as Jehovah had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them.”

However, they did not immediately erect the Tabernacle and commence its operations. God instructed Moses that should wait for the first day of the next new year. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation” (Exodus 40:1).

Instructions for setting these up then follow in verses 2-15, and verse 16 affirms that (when the time came) Moses did all as he was commanded to do. The actual narrative of this work being accomplished, then follows in verses 17 to 38 (Exodus 40). “And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up” (verse 17).

Setting up the Tabernacle and its accoutrements was completed, together with the court. However, before Moses could prepare the priests, attired and consecrated, “A cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation” (Exodus 40:34, 35). So ends the book of Exodus.

The narrative resumes in Leviticus 1:1. “And Jehovah called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying ...” These instructions by God were given on that same day — the first day of the first month of the second year of the Israelites’ wilderness experience.

These directions continue for seven chapters. These were necessary directions, for many of these offerings were to be used in the ceremony of consecrating the

(1) Apparently these were actually skins of an aquatic animal. See *Tabernacle Shadows*, page 13, and *Beauties of the Truth*, “Tabernacle Coverings of Sea-cows,” February 2010 issue.



The priesthood was consecrated in a period of seven days.

priests. So they could not be deferred. When these seven chapters of directions were completed, then Leviticus 8:1 proceeds to the consecration of Aaron and his sons to serve as priests. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying ...” What follows are the instructions from God to Moses how to consecrate the priesthood, and the account of Moses proceeding with those instructions. This work took seven days to complete.

THE THREE FUNDAMENTAL OFFERINGS

If we consider the three fundamental offerings — the burnt offering, peace offering, and sin offering — to see how these relate to one another, we may then be better prepared to grasp the purpose of the trespass offering by comparison.

The burnt offering is the kind of offering made every day, of two lambs, one in the morning and another “between the two evenings.” This refers to the ransom, the daily sacrifice, fulfilled by Jesus being put on the cross in the morning, and expiring six hours later.

The burnt offering was to be put “in order upon the wood” (Leviticus 1:8), something stipulated uniquely for the burnt offering. The wood here represents the wood of the cross, as it does also in Genesis 22:3,6, where wood was placed on the back of Isaac to carry up the mount on which he was to be offered. This compares with John 19:17, where Jesus, “bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha.”

Peace offerings are then described in Leviticus chapter three. These represent our thanks, devotion, and consecration to God, predicated on the atonement we receive through the Ransom provided by Jesus. Peace offerings were to be burned “on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is upon the wood” (Leviticus 3:5).

Sin offerings are then described in Leviticus chapter four. The purpose of a sin offering was to cleanse the offerer from unintentional sins, such as we all have through inheriting imperfection from Adam (Leviticus 4:2).

The sequence of these three fundamental offerings is given in the order of importance to a believer’s approach to God. First we recognize the Ransom given by Jesus for the condemnation upon us as children of Adam. Then, if we are properly responsive, we proceed to give our thanks, appreciation, devotions, and in the case of the saints, the consecration of ourselves to God. Thereafter comes a life of being purged of our unintentional propensity for sin, through the service of our High Priest, “passed into the heavens” (Hebrews 4:14).

TWO WORDS FOR “TRESPASS”

The following comments refer to the word “trespass” as it appears in the King James version of the Bible. These comments refer to the word as it appears in the Books

of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers (it does not appear in Deuteronomy). There are two Hebrew words used in these cases —

(1) *Asham*, Strong’s number 817, “from 816; guilt; by implication a fault” (and its companion *Ashmah*, number 819, the feminine form of 817).

(2) *Maal*, Strong’s number 4604, “from 4608; treachery, i.e. sin.” The word 4608 to which *maal* is related means “an elevation ... acclivity or platform ... a rise or (figuratively) priority.” In other words, this refers to an offense of higher magnitude than *Asham*. *Maal*, for example, is used in Joshua 7:1, 22:20, for the sin of Achan, and in Joshua 22:16, 31, where it was feared (though incorrectly) some Israelites had raised an altar as a substitute for the altar in the Tabernacle.

In Leviticus, “trespass” appears 32 times. Most of these are from *asham*. However, in three of these cases the stronger word *maal* is used, namely in Leviticus 5:15, 6:2, and 26:40. The last one refers to a collective sin of Israel as a whole, for which national punishment would be visited. The first two are of more interest to us in this study. They refer to a sin or trespass of an individual that is considered more substantial than in other cases.

Both of these are distinct from the normal words used for “sin” in the Old Testament, Strong’s 2398, *chata*, “to miss,” and its companions, 2401 *chattah*, and 2403 *chattaah* or *chattath*, “an offence.” Language is flexible, of course, and this generic word for sin, *chata*, can be used even for egregious sins. But in comparison, evidently *asham* normally indicates a higher guilt, and *maal* an even higher level of culpability.

THE SIN OFFERING

The trespass offering was an additional offering for specific infractions as they would arise, that are apparently over and above the need for a normal sin offering. Regulations respecting a normal sin offering are found in Leviticus 4, which opens with an expression denoting a new section. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speaking unto the children of Israel, saying ... “ The regulations given in chapter four show that the animal brought for a sin offering depended on the status of the offender. For a priest, or the congregation, a bullock is specified, the blood is used for sprinkling within the tabernacle, the fat and vital organs are burned on the altar, and the body is burned outside the camp. In these cases evidently the offending priest represents a member of the Church class, and an offending congregation represents a gathering of the Lord’s people during the Gospel age. In other words, in both cases this pertains to the Church during the Gospel Age. Thus the use of the blood within the tabernacle (where the church is represented during the Gospel Age). In this case the one who “accepts” the offering is God above, thus the burning (rather than eating) of the entire sacrifice — it is sent up in smoke, as to God.



A Trespass Offering called for a ram (an adult male sheep).

Subsequently two other cases are covered, namely for a ruler (Leviticus 4:22 and forward), and for a common person (verse 27 and forward). These perhaps represent the Ancient Worthies who will be rulers or princes in the Kingdom, and any of the world of mankind, “the common people” (verse 27). In these cases the animal is a male kid of the goats, or a female kid of the goats, respectively. The blood is used in the court (where the world will be in the Kingdom), the fat and vital organs are burned expressing that this offering is to God, but the meat of the animal is eaten by the priests, expressing that the Church will receive this sacrifice as representatives of God, during the Millennium.

We review this briefly as a predicate for comparing this to the Trespass Offerings in the next chapter. However, we mention in passing that later, in Leviticus 16, which describes the annual Day of Atonement, we gather some things about that day from comparing the instructions given about sin offerings in Leviticus 4. For example, compare Leviticus 16:25 with the fuller stipulations of Leviticus 4:9, 26.

Before proceeding, here are two tangent observations from Leviticus 4:35. The common version says, “And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat of the lamb is taken away from the sacrifice of the peace offerings; and the priest shall burn them upon the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD [Jehovah]: and the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him.”

(a) By referring to the “fat thereof,” evidently this implies also the kidneys and the liver that were surmounted with fat (compare this with verses 8 and 9). Apparently the same is implied in Leviticus 4:26. (b) The stipulation that these were burned “according to the offerings made by fire” (King James) is rendered in the NIV as “on top of the offerings made to the LORD by fire.”

The NASB version is similar, “on the offerings by fire to the LORD.” If this means that the fat and kidneys and liver were placed on top of burnt offering, then it repeats the instructions about those same portions of the peace offering in Leviticus 3:4,5, where those precious parts are burned “upon the burnt sacrifice, which is upon the wood, that is on the fire.” The meaning of this would be that all ultimately depends upon the ransom that Jesus gave “on the tree,” the wood (1 Peter 2:24).

THE TRESPASS OFFERING

The Trespass Offering is discussed in Leviticus chapter five. However, there are two parts of this chapter, and they reflect the difference in the Hebrew words underlying the English word “trespass” in our common versions. The word “trespass” introduced in Leviticus 5:15 is the stronger word, *maal*, 4604, mentioned above. It is repeated in Leviticus 6:2. In both of those cases the burdens required for the offender, for being made right again, are more substantial than for the cases referred to in Leviticus 5:1-13.

Additionally, to distinguish those more severe cases, notice how Leviticus 4:14 introduces them. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying ...” This reminds us how Leviticus 4:1 began, when introducing the regulations respecting sin offerings, which also began a distinct section. No such sharp distinction appears, however, at Leviticus 5:1.

The NIV study bible observes this difference by adding no subhead at the outset of chapter five, thus joining the sense of the first part of chapter five, to the sin offerings of Leviticus chapter four. But it does add a new subhead at Leviticus 5:14, “The Guilt Offering.” It then proceeds to chapter six also without a new subhead, linking the last of chapter five to the first of chapter six — but adds another subhead before Leviticus 6:8, “The Burnt Offering.”

LEVITICUS CHAPTER FIVE

This chapter begins with examples of specific infractions for which a guilt offering, or trespass offering, should be rendered. (1) Perhaps one hears a transgression, but does not speak of it. (2) If a person touches something unclean. (3) If a person thoughtlessly swears or takes an oath to do evil, and later comes to his senses. “When he shall be guilty in one of these things ... he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing.” The word “sinned” is 2398, *chata*, the general word for sin, “to miss,” noted above.

In this case “he shall bring his trespass offering” (verse 6). The word “trespass” here is 817, *asham*, guilt or fault, the weaker of the two words for “trespass.” The animal he is to bring is “a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin” (verse 6).

The word for “sin offering” here as in Leviticus 4:24, 29, is from the normal word for “sin offering,” namely

2403, *chattaah* or *chattath*. There is no separate word for “offering,” it is just the one word for sin, in the Hebrew. This use of a single term, rather than two terms, also explains 2 Corinthians 5:21, where Paul says God made Jesus “to be sin for us, who knew no sin.” It does not really mean that Jesus was made “sin.” It means that he was made a “sin offering” for us, as we would express it in English.

(The same is true about the expression “burnt offering,” it is really just “burnt,” there is no separate word for “offering.” There is a word for “offering” when the term is used by itself, as for example in Leviticus 3:2, “he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering.” Here the word is *qurban*, Strong’s number 7133, “something brought near the altar, i.e., a sacrificial present.”)

In other words, for an infraction of the three kinds listed above, the offender is to deal with this in the same way as stipulated earlier in chapter four for a normal sin. He is to bring a female kid of the goats, or a young female lamb, for an offering. So far, therefore, there is nothing more onerous about this offence than normal.

In fact, if the person is poor, there follows a provision requiring even less of him. “If he be not able to bring a lamb [or a female kid of the goats], then he shall bring for his trespass [817, *asham*], which he hath committed, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, unto the LORD; one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering.”

This is a **kind** provision for the repentant offender of small means. It suggests that God appreciate and will accept the humblest efforts toward repentance, if it is sincere, as evidenced by at least something the sinner can bring forward as evidence of sincerity. In fulfillment, this might be an apology, carefulness to avoid the fault in the future, or going on meekly to express our regret.

This option for two clean birds is instructive to us in another way also. One of them was offered for a sin offering, the other for a burnt offering. Recall that in Leviticus 4:26, some part of a normal sin offering was to be burned on the altar to God, namely the fat and the associated cleansing organs. In the case of a bird for a sin offering, a relatively small amount, the blood of one was used at the altar (Leviticus 5:9), and the other bird was burnt on the altar. To burn an offering is to cause it to ascend in smoke to God, showing that whatever priests may be involved, this offering ultimately is received by God. Further, a burnt offering was normally to be directly on the wood (Leviticus 1:8, 3:5), reminding us that the cross of Christ underlies our approach to God and our acceptance by Him.

An even more **generous** proposal follows in verse 11. “If he be not able to bring two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon: for it is a sin offering.” As normal for most sin

offerings, this flour was to be used, or appropriated, by the priest, but again some part of it was to be burned in order to ascend to God. “The priest shall take his handful of it, even a memorial thereof, and burnt it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD.”

MORE CONCERNING TRESPASSES

Thus ends the consideration of the normal case of sin, repentance, and offering. What follows in verses 14 and forward considers a more severe case, and the requirements for the offender are proportionately greater. In fact, as referred to earlier, the preceding might be considered properly part of the sin offerings of chapter four, and what follows a “Trespass” offering requiring something additional.

There are two sub categories here. (1) A transgression “in the holy things of the LORD” through “ignorance” (Leviticus 5:15), and (2) a lie or false commitment against a neighbor, in which case “ignorance” is not an underlying factor. The first is in Leviticus 5:4-19, the latter in Leviticus 6:1-7. In both of these cases the word for “trespass” is the stronger word, *maal*, 4604 (Leviticus 5:15, 6:2).

In these cases a full ram was required — an adult male sheep. There was no provision for any lesser amount. Additionally, restitution was to be made in accord with the priest’s estimate of the offense in the first case, or the actual loss to one’s neighbor in the second case. In both cases an additional 20% was added to the value as a penalty on the offender, and a benefit to the priest or the neighbor.

In the first case, verse 17 says of the offender, “though he wist [knew] it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity.” If we offend against our Heavenly Father’s wish, will, or instructions, our recognition of it should be a full measure of rectification. We may even add some restrictions upon our old flesh, to remind our old human selves of the matter, to help us not fall in that way again.

If we offend our neighbor, either spiritual brother or sister or even our earthly associates, we should make amends where feasible, and be generous in doing so. Often, of course, people see things differently, as we should be generous in our appraisal of offenses that come our way. But we should be more careful of offenses that proceed from us. Even considering how we might make up any loss or ill effects accruing to others.

“If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye ... not sons. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet ... [and] be healed” (Hebrews 12:8-12).

— Br. David Rice