



# Sin and Sacrifice

**T**HE Hebrew word that has been translated into the English as "atonement" is kaphar, and means "to cover." However, whilst there are several Hebrew verbs which signify "to cover," kaphar is always used to describe those ceremonial purgings by blood-shedding, practised, according to divine prescription, in the Mosaic ritual.

There must be some reason why this particular word was selected by the Spirit in preference to all others. The reason is not difficult to discern when it is learned that it means "to protect," "to purge or purify," as well as "to cover."

Like all other words, it is used both literally and figuratively. Seeing that transgressions cannot be covered in the literal sense, as material objects may be; the word, when applied to the covering of sin, obviously is used figuratively, the literal meaning being *to forgive, to pardon*. Hence we read: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psa. 32:1). The word here is *kacah* and not *kaphar*. It indicates the effect of atonement: the individual's sins are forgiven (Rom. 4:7), and his faith is counted to him for righteousness (vv. 13-22). Such an one has been "clothed" upon, brought under divine protection, and protected from the consequence of his sin, being in the sin-covering Name. He had been brought into relationship with the *kipporim*, or means of covering, and

the nakedness of sin has been hidden away.

### Atonement as Prescribed Under the Law

The Hebrew verb *kaphar* is variously translated in the O.T. as: *atone; make atonement; purge; reconcile; appease; pardon; forgive; disannul; be merciful*.

As a noun it appears as *kaphoreth*, and is applied to the lid, or covering, of the ark of the covenant made of pure gold; and upon and before which, the high priest was commanded to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice on the great day of atonement (or coverings: Exo. 25:17-22; Lev. 16:2-14; 23:27-28).

### Various Things for Which Atonement Was Required

The word is frequently used in Leviticus, and translated *atone* or *atonement*, according to the way in which it is used, either as a verb or a

*What is meant by the word "atonement" as used in the Scriptures? It is often suggested that it signifies at-one-ment, and therefore is expressive of unity with God. But the Hebrew word from which it is derived does not suggest that meaning. Rather does it denote "covering," but a covering effected through a specific ritual which has a vital bearing upon the offering of Christ for that purpose.*

noun. The following is a list of the various things for which an atonement was commanded to be made in the instructions given by God to Moses: for the holy place (Lev. 16:20), the most holy place (v. 16), the tabernacle (v. 33), the altar of incense (Exo. 30:10), the altar of sacrifice (29:36), the high priest before entering the most holy (Lev. 16:6-11), Aaron and his sons at their consecration as priests (Lev. 8:34), the Levites when separated from the other tribes (Num. 8:12), the people of Israel (Lev. 16:24-30), the numbering of Israel (Exo. 30:15), individuals or groups who commit sins of ignorance (Lev. 4:20; 16:30), a defiled Nazarite (Num. 6:11), a woman cleansed from an issue of blood (Lev. 15:15-30), a mother after the birth of offspring (Lev. 12:7-8), a man cured of leprosy (Lev. 14:18-20, 31), a house suspected of leprosy (v. 53).

In several of the above instances, atonement was prescribed for inanimate objects. Why was that? One reason given is that they were defiled by contact with a race that had sinned, and whose mortality and natural bias towards sin, were the result of the original transgression: "The uncleanness and transgression of the children of Israel" (Lev. 16:16). Not only were the people transgressors, but transgressors because they had given way to the sin-bias of their nature: a nature elsewhere described as sin's flesh. Such "uncleanness" was transmitted by contact, as Haggai was taught (ch. 2:13-14), and therefore the altar, mercy seat, and so forth had to be ceremonially cleansed by atonement before being used for the service of the tabernacle. Moses was commanded to first cleanse the appliances used in approach to God in worship; and then the persons who were defiled by personal transgression.

### The Antitype: Christ Jesus

The atonements under the law were made in various ways, but the covering they effected was only temporary, even as regards the requirements of the Law. This is shown by the necessity of their repetition (Heb. 10:1-4). As such they had no justifying efficacy as regards a future life. If no further provision had been made for releasing man from sin, salvation would have been impossible. But God has mercifully provided an effective sin-covering in the Son of His love, on whom all the typical offerings of the Mosaic ritual converged: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiatory (*or mercy seat*) through faith in his blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:25). It should, therefore, be evident that God has provided a covering, or means of cleansing from both moral and physical defilement; from actual transgression; or from the state of mortality that has come through sin. This covering provides for the forgiveness of actual transgression, as well as physical cleansing in the bestowal of life eternal. This latter state is described by Paul as being "clothed upon... from heaven... that being clothed we shall not be found naked" (2Cor. 5:2-3). One whose sins have been covered, or forgiven, is in a state of reconciliation with God, and therefore atoned for. One who has been changed from a state of mortality to that of immortality (1Cor. 15:42, 44, 53) is at one with his Creator both morally and physically, a partaker of the divine nature, and equal unto the angels that cannot die anymore (Lk. 20:36).

The things atoned for under the Mosaic Law, such as the altar, mercy seat, holy place, high priest, and so forth, point forward to the Lord Jesus Christ. To those under the Law they

***“It was a sacrifice operative on himself first of all; for he is the beginning of the new creation, the firstfruits of the new harvest, the foundation of the new temple”***

foreshadowed that the Redeemer, when he appeared, would possess a nature identical with that of those he would come to save. The type taught, that as a member of the human race, he would possess a nature that had been made subject to mortality by sin in the beginning, and that from this nature he would need to be cleansed by a

change to immortality. Death was the means appointed of God to that end, so that the law proclaimed the anomaly that the way of life was through death.

In Heb. 9:19-28, Paul links the things atoned for under the Law with the offering of the Lord. He declares: “Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purged with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”

Carefully note what Paul is saying. He teaches that the *patterns of things in the heavens* were purged or cleansed by the shedding of blood, or the atoning sacrifice. He then declares that the *heavenly things themselves* are purged, or cleansed, with better sacrifices.

#### **The “Heavenly Things” Themselves**

The former *patterns of things* relate to those things atoned for under the Law, reference to which has already been made. What, then, are the *heavenly things themselves*? They comprise the antitypical altar of sacrifice, altar of incense, mercy seat, holy place, high

priest, and so forth. And to whom do they point forward? To Christ and those in him. Therefore, Paul continues: “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself...” He has done so by virtue of the offering of himself, both in life (Acts 2:24) and by death (Heb. 13:20).

#### **Bro. Roberts’ Exposition**

The antitype, as fulfilled by the Lord, has been explained by Bro. Roberts in *The Law of Moses* (p. 90-91) in the following terms:

“The type is before us; the antitype is in Christ. He is the altar, the book of the law, and the other things that come after. The sprinkling of the typical blood on both by Moses prefigured the operation of divine love and wisdom in Christ’s own sacrifice. It was a sacrifice operative on himself first of all; for he is the beginning of the new creation, the firstfruits of the new harvest, the foundation of the new temple. He was the nucleus of a new and healthy life developed among men, for the healing of all who should become incorporate with it. As such, it was needful that he should himself be the subject of the process, and the first reaper of the results. Hence the testimony that ‘the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that Great Shepherd of the Sheep, *through the blood of the everlasting covenant* (Heb. 13:20), and that by his own blood, entering into the holy place he obtained (*middle, or self-subjective state of the verb*) eternal redemption (*‘for us’ is interpolated*)” (9:12). The Father saved him from death for his obedience unto death (Heb. 5:7-9; Phil. 2:8-9; Rom. 5:19).

“The common view which disconnects Christ from the operation of his own sacrifice would have required that Moses should have left the altar and the book of the law unsprinkled. These

were parts of what Paul terms 'the patterns of things in the Heavens,' concerning which he remarks that it was necessary they should be purified with the sacrifices ordained. The application of this to Christ as the antitype he makes instantly; 'but (it was necessary that) the heavenly things themselves (should be purified) with better sacrifices than these' (Heb. 9:23). The phrase 'the heavenly things,' is an expression covering all the high, holy, and exalted things of which the Mosaic pattern was but a foreshadowing. They are all comprehended in Christ, who is

the nucleus from which all will be developed, the foundation on which all will be built. The statement therefore indicates that it was necessary that Christ should first of all be purified with better sacrifices than the Mosaic: 'Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place'... not into the holy places made with hands, which are figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us' (Heb. 9:12, 24)."

— H. P. Mansfield (1976).

**POEM**

Psalm 19  
*God's  
Powerful  
Works  
and  
Marvellous  
Word*

There is a path for the way of the sun,  
which leads a wanderer approaching his home,  
Reaching just like a strong man's arm,  
and scorching the heavens, blazing at noon.

Yahweh's lamp perfect, converting the soul,  
His true testimony will make good men,  
And light are His statutes, rejoicing the heart,  
All bliss, commitment, embracing the soul.

The Lord, God of clean earth, and the sky,  
for 108 times a day, the sun is seen,  
to show His glory, and His strength,  
and the magnificence of His realm.

How many times, the angels praise Thy name,  
How many times, the saints will glorify Thee,  
How many times, the angels will sing,  
How many times, the saints will glorify Thee.

My eyes have seen Thy glory, O Lord,  
My eyes have seen Thy glory, O Lord,  
My eyes have seen Thy glory, O Lord,  
My eyes have seen Thy glory, O Lord.

My uprightness gained, and my peace,  
My uprightness gained, and my peace,  
My uprightness gained, and my peace,  
My uprightness gained, and my peace.

The words of my mouth—let them praise Thee, O  
Lord,  
My heart's meditation accepted at length,  
And in Thy sight holy, and ready for Thee,  
O Lord, my redeemer, and glory and strength.

— H. P. Mansfield (To be continued)