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Remarks on the Sin Offering

'And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering'.

'Then the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour its remaining blood at the base of the altar'.

'He shall remove all its fat, as fat is removed from the sacrifice of peace offering; and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a sweet aroma to the LORD. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him'.

Leviticus 4:29-31

I have a question about the sin offering and hope you can answer it. I have always had the opinion that the sin offerings and trespass offerings were not pleasing to the Lord, because they had to deal with sin and guilt. But in Leviticus 4:31 it says as the only time in relation to the sin offering that it was burned on the altar for a sweet smell (or: a sweet aroma) to the Lord. How can this be explained?

I think the explanation of this is not so difficult, because it is true only for the fat, which was burned for a sweet aroma unto the Lord. By the way, this applies to all peace offerings, sin offerings and trespass offerings. The fat and also the blood were exclusively meant for the Lord (Lev. 7:22-27). However, the aspect of the seriousness of sin is expressed clearly enough by the burning of the sin offering itself outside the camp, at least if its blood was brought into the sanctuary (Lev. 4:8-12).

Also interesting is the precept that the sin offering had to be slaughtered on *the same place* where the burnt offering was slaughtered. These offerings are types of the same unique sacrifice of Golgotha, but in the Old Testament laws we see

different aspects of it. The sin offering is in a certain respect even 'more important' than the burnt offering, because the blood of certain sin offerings was brought into the sanctuary and sprinkled on the Mercy Seat for reconciliation (cf. Eph. 1:7)! The sin offering is therefore called most holy.

Indeed, the term 'for a sweet aroma' is used only once in connection with the sin offering, namely in the case of an unintentional sin by someone from the common people (Lev. 4:27-31). We also find it three times in connection with the burnt offering (Lev. 1), and three times with the food or grain offering (Lev. 2). Then we have it two more times in connection with the sacrifice of thanks or the peace offering (Lev. 3), and twice in the law of the grain offering (Lev. 6). Finally, we find it mentioned twice during the consecration of the priests, in connection with the burnt offering and the ram of consecration (Lev. 8). But the term 'an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord' – used each time in relation to the fat of the sin offerings and trespass offerings – also points to this aspect of being acceptable to the Lord.

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