

Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

Series: Covenant: God's Way of Relationship



Teaching Sermon Notes: "Moses: The Covenant of Law, Part Three"

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When we speak of the "Old Covenant," we are talking about the covenant God made with Moses. God made that covenant with Moses for the people redeemed out of Egypt. With the coming of Christ and the New Covenant, type and symbol became substance. The moral law would continue as a mirror, as a guide, and as a tutor to lead people to the need for the Promised One. In the Old Covenant, a very big aspect was the sacrificial system, which demonstrates the mercy and grace of God. Priests speak for the people. The Levitical Priesthood was established to provide a system by which sins could be covered and people could be able to continue in the covenant community and not be cut off. Today, we cannot speak of the Old Covenant really without speaking about that which is better in the New Covenant.

The apostles teach us that the death of Christ was an offering and sacrifice made on behalf of those that the Father had given Jesus. The Old Covenant sacrifices were types, or typical, and transitory. They were but a shadow of the substance and ceased when the reality came; that reality being Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Mediator of the New Covenant in His Blood. The Old Covenant system is replaced by a better. The Old Covenant system is abrogated as insufficient to meet man's spiritual needs. Jesus is sacrificed once for all time for the remission of sins and so the Old Covenant sacrifices are no longer needed.

Hebrews 12:18 calls this system an economy given with terrible accompaniments. Worshippers under the Mosaic Law, priests and people, were subject to numerous rules and duties. Violation in the least degree entailed guilt, defilement, and danger. A trespass could be followed by immediate death at the hand of God. Sometimes people were separated from the congregation and from the privilege of approach to God. Some were cut off. Without the shedding of blood there was no remission even for ceremonial defilement.

The whole system displayed a method by which the worshipper, estranged from God and out of covenant standing, could be restored, and come before the inflexible holy and yet merciful God. The penalty as well as the distance could be removed only by sacrifice. Those sacrifices were a grace and a mercy from God, but the message was clear. Transgression violating the order of the universe must be visited by punishment. Death must follow, and no mere regret could remove the guilt. Without a sin offering acceptable to God to atone for the trespass, the offender must die without the possibility of living in fellowship with God. The mercy God provided was a system of substitutionary atonement. None of these sacrifices, however, required an inward repentance or altered conduct on the part of the worshipper, though certainly, God wanted a change of heart and a turning unto Himself.

With that in mind, we will look at the steps and see how they come up in the NT writings.

1. **The worshipper violates the law and contracts guilt.** It is something for which a sin-offering is provided. **The offering had to be a clean animal**, without blemish, brought to the tabernacle of the congregation. **The animal had to be alive**, presented by a willing offerer

voluntarily. The presentation was to be **upon the altar** which involved an elevation such that the victim was to be brought up. 1 Peter 2:24 Jesus was brought up as He was lifted up upon the cross. The victim had to be without defect or blemish. 1 Peter 1:19; Hebrews 9:14. Jesus had to be sinless, righteous, and innocent in order to stand for the guilty. The holiness of Jesus was an essential element in the atonement. The atonement is a satisfaction to justice, a fulfillment of the Law. Perfect holiness and sinless purity were required. Jesus is that.

2. The next act of the sacrificial offering was the laying on of the hand upon the victim's head. This represents the transfer of guilt to the substitute. It was accompanied on the Day of Atonement with the confession of sins. (Lev. 16:21) The animal was devoted to death. It was visited with death because sin was imputed to it. It was made sin, or made incorporated guilt. The laying on of the hands, at one time for one purpose and at another time for another, was the transfer from one party to another. The offerer put himself in a relationship to the victim; he had a connection to it. He communicated or transferred his own guilt to it, or the nation's guilt was transferred to it, according to the private or public nature of the sacrifice. After this transfer, the animal suffered death for the sin. The animal took the punishment required for the sin in the place of those for whom it died. Jesus is that once-for-all-time vicarious and atoning sacrifice...Mark 15:26; Romans 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21.

3. The third step involved the animal's death. The wages of sin is death, says Paul. Sin and death stand related as cause and consequence. The animal must die by the hand of the worshipper. It was his sin that was laid upon the animal—his death. It was violent, really.

Jesus was not to meet His death in any other way but by violence. The sinner's hand was to be the instrument of inflicting the death, even as the sinner's guilt was the meritorious cause as to why death could come to Jesus at all. The death was a penalty, a satisfaction of divine justice. The death itself was punitive, not just some means to an end of getting the blood out of the victim. The worshipper owed death; Jesus died in his place. People crucified the Lord of Glory. They put Him on that cross. Acts 3:13-15; 1 Cor. 2:8

4. The fourth step in the sacrificial ritual was the sprinkling of the blood. Up until this point, the priest was a spectator. Now the priest **receives the flowing blood** of the animal. The priest **puts the blood on the horns** or highest point, of the altar and **pours it out at the bottom** (Lev. 4:5-24). This demonstrated that the meeting place between God and His people was from top to bottom covered with blood, that the sins of the people were covered by an atonement, and that the worshippers were no more exposed to God's anger and wrath. The blood received by the priest, and made his own, was regarded as the vicariously shed blood of the priest.

So it is not the victim alone, but also the priest, without whom the sacrifice could not be rightly offered. **The priest had to receive the blood and the priest had to make the blood his own.** What was done upon the victim was supposed to have been done upon the priest, who now became a party to the action of vicarious atonement. **The priest appropriated the blood, which now passed for his own blood.** This is in addition to the ablutions [washing oneself], vestments, and other sanctifications which shadowed the holiness and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

The ritual advanced until it reached this **act of sprinkling**. This is where we find sin expiated, atoned for to cancel guilt, and divine wrath propitiated, or appeased. The blood was brought to God and made to cover sin. The sprinkling, whether performed at the horns of the altar or in the holy of holies, the meeting-place between God and His people, figured forth that the sin of the individual or of the nation, though piled up as an heap, was now covered and all cause of separation was removed. Death had intervened. **The blood that had passed through death**

was now most holy and had atoning power wherever it was sprinkled. (Hebrews 13:12)
This was the highpoint, the application of the blood which made the redemption. The objective atonement consisted in the sprinkling. Jesus was both victim and high priest (Order of Melchizedek). Hebrews 5:4-6; 9:11-22.

5. The last act of the sacrificial ritual consisted in the burning of the victim. Two things need our attention: the fire and the sweet-smelling savour (Hebrews 13:11; Ephesians 5:2) Holy fire fell from heaven on Aaron's first sacrifice, and was never to be extinguished (Lev. 6:12, 13; Law of the Burnt Offering, Lev. 9:22-24; Lev. 5:6, 7). "Only the sacrifice which was consumed by this fire, and rose to heaven as a sweet-smelling savour, was really acceptable." (George Smeaton). The fire was given to produce that sweet-smelling savour. It denotes the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 3:11; Acts 2:3; Luke 9:49; Hebrews 9:14). We see the fire of the sacrifice kindled when we see Jesus setting His face to go to Jerusalem, when we see Him fully bent to what He must do. The Eternal Spirit strengthened Jesus to consummate the work. There is zeal, love, obedience. Our God is the Flame of Yah, a consuming fire, a holy God who consumes all that is contrary to His nature and ways, desiring harmony and vital spiritual union with Himself. Jesus' sinless and perfect obedience is that active obedience vital to His being the spotless Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. The blood-sprinkling refers to vicarious suffering; the burning, with its sweet-smelling savour, refers to the vicarious fulfilling of the law. The Law is the fiery law. God is just and true, righteous in all His judgments. The Law is fire-dartings, given in love to a redeemed people, an act of grace. Deut. 33:2ff ; Acts 7:57; Psalm 68:17

The Law is called fiery (the fiery law) because of its purging, searching, and inflaming. The wrath is the fiery wrath inflicted upon unrepentant sinners.

Matthew Henry comments: "Deuteronomy 33:1-5 To all his precepts, warnings, and prophecies, Moses added a solemn blessing. He begins with a description of the glorious appearances of God, in giving the law. His law works like fire. If received, it is melting, warming, purifying, and burns up the dross of corruption; if rejected, it hardens, sears, pains, and destroys. The Holy Spirit came down in cloven tongues, as of fire; for the gospel also is a fiery law. The law of God written in the heart, is a certain proof of the love of God shed abroad there: we must reckon His law one of the gifts of His grace."

A name of God is El Qanna, or Elkannah. It means consuming fire. Deut. 4:24. It refers to the intense marriage relationship God has with His bride. God has a consuming zeal for the ones He loves. God purges with the refining fire of the Law of Elkannah all those in Israel who adulterate His "bride" by worshipping other gods. God wants harmony, unhindered vital spiritual union, order and not confusion. "In establishing righteous law, truth cannot be compromised by non-truth." (Speckhart) God has an immutable plan and it will prevail. Jesus came in zeal for His Father's house. We are that house now. Jesus in His obedience to the consuming fire of the laws, statutes, and judgments of El Kannah removed those things that stand in the way of the relationship God wants with His people. Everything has been done. Now what Jesus has accomplished must be applied to us. The Holy Spirit comes where the Blood has been applied that we might live in this vital spiritual union with Christ. Romans 6:3-5.

A. H. Strong wrote: "The Seven Together's' sums up the Scripture testimony with regard to the consequences of the believer's Union with Christ: 1. Crucified together with Christ – [Gal. 2:20](#). 2. Died together with Christ – [Col. 2:20](#). 3. Buried together with Christ – [Rom. 6:4](#). 4. Quickened together with Christ – [Eph. 2:5](#). 5. Raised together with Christ – [Col. 3:1](#). 6. Suffers together with Christ – [Rom. 8:17](#). 7. Glorified together with Christ – [Rom. 8:17](#). Union with Christ results in common sonship, relation to God, character, influence and destiny." (<http://www.abideinchrist.com/keys/union2.html>)

John Owen in *Communion with God*: Our vital union with Christ is illustrated in the Scriptures from the union of a building and its foundation ([Eph. 2:20-22](#)), the union between a husband and wife ([Rom. 7:4](#)), the union of the vine and its branches ([John 15:1-10](#)), from the union between the member and the head of the body ([1 Cor. 6:15, 19; 12:12](#)), and union of the race with the source of its life in Adam ([Rom. 5:12, 21; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45-49](#)).
(<http://www.abideinchrist.com/keys/union2.html>)

So we have the illustrations of the building, the bride, the body, and the branch together with the blessing of God's promise fulfilled. I'll close with this:

“And to you and your descendants I will give the land of your sojourn--all the land of Canaan--as an eternal possession; and I will be their God.” Genesis 17:8

And He told me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give freely from the spring of the water of life. The one who is victorious will inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he will be My son. Revelation 21:6, 7.

Thanking the One True God for sending Jesus Christ,

Mary Craig

Mary Craig, D. Min.

**“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.”
Revelation 21:7**

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