

## **SACRIFICE IN THE GOD-MAN RELATIONSHIP IN THE PENTATEUCH**

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In the fulness of God's revelation through the Old and New Testaments to the human race it is explicitly stated that the shedding of blood is essential for the forgiveness of sin, Heb 9:22. It was through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that the sin of man was removed providing salvation for him.

The importance of sacrifice in the God-man relationship was progressively revealed throughout OT times. Through the Mosaic revelation at Mount Sinai various offerings were designated as the means by which the Israelites could approach God in the sanctuary that they built for God to dwell among them. The highest point in the priestly-prophetic revelation is portrayed in the servant of the Lord whose life was given as a guilt offering for the justification of many (Isa 53:10-11).

The significance and importance of bringing an offering to God is gradually unfolded as God makes himself known to the human race. The act of bringing an offering to God is first recorded concerning Cain and Abel in their relationship with God. The first altar in man's history is ascribed to Noah. The building of a sanctuary with its altar for man to present his offering to God comes with the establishment of Israel as God's holy people under Moses.

What motivated godfearing people before the time of Moses to bring an offering to God? What significance and meaning did their offerings have for them individually in their relationship with God? Frequently in preaching and teaching, the fuller revelation of subsequent centuries is applied to the events or religious experiences of those who lived before Mosaic times.

In our consideration of the significance of sacrifice in the God-man relationship it is basically important to let the text and the context determine the nature and meaning for the individuals involved. Undoubtedly their relationship with God was as vital as that of any godfearing individual in the history of mankind.

### **Offerings by Cain and Abel**

The bringing of offerings by Cain and Abel seems to have been a normal act of acknowledging God. With no indication in the context that they had specific divine instructions for making sacrifices this action very likely came from the free impulse of their nature as God had created them.<sup>1</sup> Both must have felt the need to bring their offerings as acts of gratitude in the context of their consciousness of God.