



# REFORMED

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*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion:  
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;  
he shall set me up upon a rock.*  
—Psalm 27:5

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## MEDITATION

And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish, and unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of wheaten flour shalt thou make them. And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams. And Aaron and his sons shalt thou bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation...And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to all things which I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them.

— Exodus 29:1–4, 35

### The Consecration Ceremonies

**T**he priests must be consecrated. How important it was for the priests to be consecrated! In Exodus 29 God gave Moses detailed instructions for the consecration ceremonies. God repeated those detailed instructions in Leviticus 8. God described the day of Aaron's and his sons' consecration in splendid terms in Exodus 40. Again and again God emphasized to Old Testament Israel that the priests must be consecrated.

And no wonder, for in the consecration of the priests lies the gospel of our salvation. The priest who fulfilled all priests is Jesus Christ. And the consecration that fulfilled all consecrations is Christ's. The Old Testament consecration ceremonies hallowed men who had infirmity and sin. But the gospel promise of God hallowed “the Son, who is consecrated for evermore” (Heb. 7:28). Let us look in on the consecration of the priests as the shadow and behold therein the truth of the glorious consecration of Jesus Christ.

God gave Moses a series of ceremonies to perform upon the priests, by which ceremonies God would “hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office” (Ex. 29:1). Just as there were seven garments for the high priest (vv. 5–6), so there were seven consecration ceremonies that would be performed over seven days (v. 35). The ceremonies were washing the priests, dressing

the priests, anointing the priests, sacrificing the bullock, sacrificing the ram of burnt offering, sacrificing and waving the ram of consecration, and the holy meal.

These consecration ceremonies consecrated the priests to serve God in the office of priest. What does it mean to consecrate? Consecration goes by many names in scripture: consecrate, hallow, separate, devote, sanctify, dedicate, and more. But the simple meaning of all those terms is *to set a thing apart unto God*. That which was consecrated was holy—wholly given to the Lord.

Why must the priests be consecrated to God? Because God is the holy God! God is perfectly consecrated to himself. The infinite God is infinitely for the infinite God. Our God is a consuming fire, who burns unto himself with an infinite love and without being consumed. And because God is holy, his priests must be holy. “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (I Pet. 1:16).

And now by faith behold the priest who is perfectly consecrated to God, Jesus Christ. He is the “holy child Jesus” (Acts 4:27). He is “the Holy One of God” (Luke 4:34). He is the “Holy One” (Acts 2:27). Moses' law of the consecration ceremonies “maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore” (Heb. 7:28).

And why is Jesus consecrated to God? For our sakes, that we in him might also belong to God. “And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (John 17:19). In the consecration ceremonies

behold the promise of your high priest! And in him behold your salvation! “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14).

—AL

## HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S BANNER ARTICLES

*The Banner*

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(pp. 70–71)

Our Doctrine by Rev. H. Hoeksema

### Article CXLIV: The New King and His Kingdom: Blood in the Sanctuary

“For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burnt without the camp.”—Heb. 13:11

If the sanctuary of the old dispensation as it stood in Jerusalem was a perpetual gospel, a silent witness of God’s covenant with his people Israel, no less was there a gospel message in Israel’s sacrifices under the law. In general they carried the testimony that atonement is through blood and the covenant communion with God is possible only on that basis of righteousness and, therefore, by atonement for sin. In the chapter from which the above text is quoted the author plainly refers to this typical element in Israel’s sacrifices. For, following this text, the author writes: “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.” The words are addressed to the Hebrew Christians. They were so thoroughly acquainted with the service of temple and tabernacle. They could so easily recall to their minds that old dispensational service. So often they had entered that sanctuary and had themselves brought the sacrifices of which the sacred writer speaks. And, therefore, reference to that service and to the sacrifices of the old dispensation signified much to them. It spoke to them clearly. Still more. At this time there was danger that they should fall back into the service of the shadows after reality had come, to prefer the

type above the antitype that had come in Jesus. They were not fully divorced from the old sacrificial rites and could hardly become accustomed to the thought that the entire rich temple service had had its day. And, therefore, the writer in this epistle refers repeatedly to these rites and shadows, not, indeed, to have the Hebrew Christian continue in them, but to lead them on to the grace and liberty of the new dispensation, from the shadow to Christ, to make plain to them that all these rites were shadows indeed, and that, now reality had come, they were of no significance anymore. He is aware of the fact that for many centuries these shadows had served to picture to the people of God the grace in Christ, and that for that reason they could even now be referred to in order to elucidate to the minds of these Christians the great significance of the antitype of them all. And, therefore, he refers to part of the temple service in the text quoted, to a particular, most significant type of Christ when he writes: “For the bodies of those beasts whose blood was brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin are burnt without the gate.”

Among all the sacrifices that were offered in the tabernacle and the temple of the Old Testament day the sin offering occupied undoubtedly and most naturally an important place. Even as the bloody tree of Golgotha, the great and real and only offering for sin, always must occupy

the central place in the faith of the New Testament believer, so the sin offering was of chief importance among Israel. And even as he that denies the atoning value of Jesus' blood cannot be called a Christian, no matter how beautiful his doctrine and life may otherwise appear, so the Israelite that neglected to bring the sin offering was not worthy of the name of his people. There were many kinds of sin offering. They may probably be divided into two classes. In the first place there were those whose flesh was eaten by the priests that officiated, and in the second place those whose bodies were burnt without the camp. Those sin offerings whose flesh was eaten by the priests were brought in many different cases. In general it may, perhaps, be said that they were offered whenever the priest himself was not involved in the sin to be atoned by the sacrifice. In that case, if he himself were involved, he could not symbolically bear the sin of the people. But whenever he was not involved he was supposed to eat the flesh of the offering in the holy place. Thus a kid of the goats was offered for a ruler when through ignorance he had sinned, its blood was poured out at the altar of burnt offering that stood in the court, and the flesh was eaten by the priests. Thus, if any individual had sinned in the midst of the congregation without the knowledge of the latter, a kid was offered and its flesh was eaten likewise by the priest. A female kid of the goats was offered for just an individual Israelite as a sin offering, a ewe lamb for a Nazarite, and often a pair of turtledoves or young pigeons for purification, as, for instance, by the mother of Jesus. In all these cases a sin offering was brought for the individual or for the congregation at large. Characteristic of these particular offerings was that their blood was not carried into the holy place to be sprinkled before the veil and on the altar of incense, but it was poured out at the altar of burnt offering in the court of the sanctuary. You remember the three divisions of the sanctuary. First there was the court with the altar of burnt offering, next the holy place with the altar of incense, lastly the most holy place with the ark of the covenant and its mercy seat.

Now, the blood of those animals whose flesh was eaten by the priests was not carried into the holy place, but poured out at the altar of burnt offering that stood in the outer court.

In distinction from these, however, there were those other sin offerings whose blood was carried into the holy place. It is of these that the writer in Heb. 22 makes mention. Their bodies were burnt without the camp, so he says. These were brought whenever the priest himself was involved, whenever the sacrifice was intended to atone for his own sin, too, when the flesh of the animal, therefore, was conceived as laden with his sin as well as with the sin of the people. When, for instance, the priest himself had sinned and atonement was to be made for him, he was to bring a bullock as a sin-offering. The same offering was brought to atone for the sin of the entire congregation when the priest was included. And on the great day of atonement the two were evidently combined. For on that day the priest was to offer first of all for himself and bring a bullock for a sin offering in order then to bring the goat as a sin offering for the entire congregation. It is to these that the author in Heb. 13 especially has reference. For it was characteristic of these sin offerings that their blood was carried into the holy place, on the great day of atonement even into the most holy place, to be sprinkled before Jehovah; and, further, that their flesh, their bodies were carried outside of the camp to be burnt in a clean place.

In order to understand the typical significance of these sin offerings we must have their ritual somewhat clearly before our minds. Suppose then that a sin offering is to be brought for the whole congregation. The congregation of Israel gathers before the sanctuary and brings the animal for the sacrifice to the door of the tabernacle. The elders, as representatives of the entire congregation, proceed to lay their hands on the victim and confess the sin of the people, thus symbolically transferring the unholiness of Israel to the animal. Then the animal is killed. The priest takes some of the blood of the animal and carries it into the holy place. In that holy

place he sprinkles the blood seven times before the veil and upon the altar that stood before Jehovah, that is, the altar of incense. The rest of the blood he pours out at the base of the altar of burnt offering in the outer court. The fat of the animal, as representing undoubtedly the sanctified parts, is burnt on the altar of burnt offering, but for the rest, the whole animal, hide and all, is carried outside of the camp to be burnt in a clean place. With respect to the sin offering that was brought on the great day of atonement, the ritual was entirely the same, with this difference that the blood of the animal was carried by the high priest and not merely into the holy place before the veil, but into the very presence of the Lord in the holy of holies, in order to be sprinkled as an atoning sacrifice before the very countenance of Jehovah on the mercy seat covering the ark.

The significance of this rich ritual is clear. The general message it bore was that of expiation of sin through blood, the washing away not of a particular offense for which the trespass offering was instituted, but of the sin of the congregation in general. Sin made separation between God and his people. Without atonement communion with God was impossible. The people could not appear in his presence, could have no communion with him and expect his blessings, could not be his covenant people unless the guilt and unholiness of their sin was taken away. The purpose of the sin offering was to teach Israel that its guilt was removed and the unholiness of its sin was destroyed. In harmony with this main idea was the entire ritual in all its

details. The laying on of hands on the head of the victim by the elders signified that their sin was transferred to the animal, that the latter now bore their sin before Jehovah. The killing of the animal signified that the victim suffered righteous punishment for their sin, that by this punishment their guilt was removed. The sprinkling of the blood seven times before the veil spoke of the reestablishment of the covenant relationship. In the sevenfold sprinkling of the blood of atonement the covenant of God with his people is firm. And the burning of the body of their sin in a clean place outside of the camp plainly preached that their sin and its unholiness was removed from them, was carried away and actually destroyed. For the flesh of that animal was sin-laden, was saturated as it were with the unholiness of Israel. The sin of Israel was contracted by the flesh of the victim. That this flesh was carried away and burnt clearly pictured to the people of God not only that their sins were remembered no more, but that they were destroyed. The body of sin was no more. They were a holy people unto the Lord. Of course, all this was but typical and symbolical. These sacrifices had to be repeated. And by their oft repetition the people were taught that the blood of bulls and goats could not finally atone for sin and that the burning of bodies of sacrificial victims did not in reality make them holy before Jehovah. And thus the sin offering pointed forward to a better sacrifice, to him who would suffer outside of the gate and with one sacrifice atone for all and forever.

—Grand Rapids, Mich.

