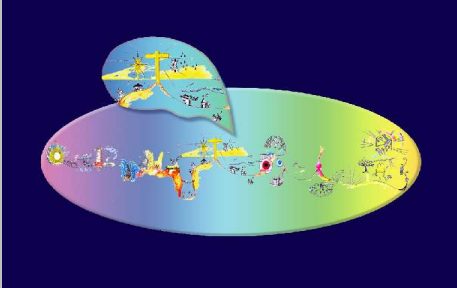


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We believe in one GOD, in three persons; FATHER, SON and HOLY SPIRIT. We regard the Bible (both Hebrew Bible and New Testaments) as the only infallible authoritative WORD OF GOD.

HULDAH MINISTRY aims to return to the Word Of God, founded on Hebrew background and to interpret it from Hebraic perspective, acknowledging that Jesus is a Jew and the Jewish-ness of His teaching as a continuation from the Hebrew Bible. The Ministry also aims to put His teaching into practice, to have a closer relationship with the Lord, Jesus Christ, and to regularly have a Christian fellowship so that this-worldly kingdom of God will materialise in the midst of the followers of Jesus here and now, as well as earnestly seeking Christ's Return to establish the otherworldly Kingdom of God on earth.

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HULDAH MINISTRY

LETTER TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST

[ONCE- AND-FOR-ALL-OFFERING]

If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathised with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your prosperity, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him," but we are not of those who shrink back and destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

HEBREWS 10:26-39.

The fourth warning in the epistle to the Hebrews is written in 10:26-39. It is a solemn warning against the possibility of apostasy after tasting the fullness of Christ along with the third warning in Hebrews 5:11-6:20 (which was already examined in the previous letter). In the passage preceding Chapter 10, the author of the epistle goes on to express the clear contrast between sacrifice under the Levitical priesthood and Christ's offering of Himself. The author's firm confidence in Christ and his claim is that not one of the worshippers under the former Levitical order was completely cleansed by annually repeated animal sacrifices and felt entirely guilt-free from their sins, until Jesus Christ achieved the ultimate once-for-all sacrifice on the cross.

Before moving on to the warning of apostasy by the wilful sin of rejecting Christ's atoning sacrifice after receiving the knowledge of the truth, the author explores the perfection of the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ in the first twenty two verses of the same chapter. The passage of Hebrews 10:5-7, quoting Psalm 40:6-8, calls readers' attention to all the four offerings elaborated in the first seven chapters of Leviticus: ***"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'here I am —it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, O God.'"*** The four sacrifices mentioned here in the passage are the PEACE offering, the MEAL offering, BURNT offering and SIN offering. The author of Hebrews claims that although the shedding of animal blood could neither change a person's heart nor put away sin completely, God, in anticipation of and as a foreshadow of Christ's ultimate sacrifice, prescribed in the law that the sins of Jewish worshippers were forgiven under the Levitical sacrificial system. It would be worth examining all the offerings that the law required and which met specific needs in the life of the worshipper.

There are six offerings: (1)The BURNT offering (2)The GRAIN (MEAL) offering (3)The DRINK offering (4)The FELLOWSHIP offering (5)The SIN offering (6)The GUILT (TRESPASS) offering. Except (3), all are detailed in the Book of Leviticus. Leviticus mainly concerns itself with the service of worship at the tabernacle, addressing the called-out ones (the saved), i.e., the priests, while Exodus gives directions for building the tabernacle.

First, a ***'burnt offering'*** as mentioned in Leviticus 1 is the oldest offering that was first implemented by Abel, Noah, Abraham, and so on, far before the institution of the law. This was a voluntary offering, made only by those who wanted access to God. The burnt sacrifice was called 'olah' in Hebrew that meant "that which ascends," accurately depicting the smoke arising from the total consummation of the sacrifice and literally ascending to the heavens as ***'an aroma pleasing to the LORD'*** (Le.1:9,:13,:17). This sacrifice was actually a foreshadow of who Christ was and what God the Father saw in Christ, as Paul put it: ***'Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.'*** (Ep.5:2). Thus, Christ appeased God's wrath, and God was satisfied with what Christ did for our sins in our place. For this offering, ***'an animal from either the herd or the flock'***, classified as a clean, domesticated and obedient herbivorous animal was used, and animals of prey and of carnivorous nature were never used. On top of that, the sacrifice had to be a male in its prime without blemish. This speaks of Christ as a sinless perfect sacrifice, which Peter put it by quoting from Isaiah: ***'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.'*** The sacrificial ritual accompanied a symbolism of a transfer of sin from an offerer to the innocent victim (which stood in the place of the offerer). While the offerer confessed his sins by laying his hand on the head of the victim, the animal died a substitutionary death. This was exactly what Christ did for us: ***'God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God'*** (2Co.5:21).

After the slaughtering of the victim, the priest took the blood and sprinkled it against the altar on all sides. Here the blood represented life and it was presented to God. The way in which the sacrifice was presented to God; skinned and cut into pieces, made it completely exposed, and also easy to consume, symbolising how defenceless the victim was and how everything, i.e., both the inside and outside of the victim was consumed by fire and offered to God. Significantly, the victim was killed at the north side of the altar, which also speaks of both the location of the crucifixion and the burial place of Christ, the garden tomb on the north side of Jerusalem. In this burnt offering, Christ met the entire requirement of the high and holy standard of God's law.

The second ***'grain (meal) offering'*** in Leviticus 2 is a kind of a ***'fragrant offering'*** and yet, this is a sacrifice without blood. When Daniel prophesied the cessation of offerings in the temple in the last days

he referred to two clear divisions of offering; **'sacrifice and offering (oblation).'** Here, the former **'sacrifice'** means sacrifices **with blood** and the latter **'offering (oblation)'**, sacrifices **without blood**. The grain offering represents the offerer's everything; person, body and possessions. It was generally presented along with some animal sacrifice (sacrifice with blood) and it was also offered daily. The material comprising the grain offering was **'fine flour,' 'oil,' 'incense (frankincense),'** and **'salt,'** and each ingredient symbolises the following:

Fine flour that was cleansed from bran by passing through the sieve is understood to have represented "humanity in perfection", in other words, it formed a type of man's self and substance so as to be dedicated to God when it is purified by the blood of sacrifice. This was fully brought out by Jesus Christ, the ultimate sacrifice for removing man's sin. Oil (olive oil) represents the Holy Spirit who sets one apart for holiness. Incense denotes the acceptance of the offering. Salt denotes incorruptibility, purification and preservation. Salt was also an emblem of abiding covenant as expressed in the term; **"the salt of the covenant" (Le.2:13)**. However, in contrast to these components, it was forbidden to mix **'yeast'** and **'honey'**. Yeast symbolises a figure of sin; an evil, corrupted nature such as pride that puffs up. Honey symbolises a type of human affection because it turns sour and can lead to fermentation despite its natural sweetness. Neither yeast nor honey was allowed on the altar. Uniquely, the oil poured on the offering is an expression of Christ's anointing by the Holy Spirit and the offering mingled with oil is possibly the expression of Christ's incarnation by the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, the grain offering represents a holy life of Christ dedicated to the Lord, significantly as the grain offering was to be totally burnt as a sacred gift expressing devotion to the Lord.

Thirdly, there is a **'drink offering'** as one of the three offerings totally dedicated to the Lord, along with the other two that have been referred to above. Numbers 15:1-10 explores this drink offering. It indicates that wine (drink) offerings must accompany all burnt- and fellowship- offerings. Its observation began only after the Israelites came to Canaan, and it is to be continually observed in the coming Millennium kingdom.

Fourthly, there is a **'fellowship (peace) offering'**, whose essential character is literally "fellowship". Although this offering is very similar to the burnt offering, a big difference is that a "female" animal had to be offered, whose character generally typifies a measure of both imperfection and weakness. Having been presented after the burnt- and grain-offerings, this offering seems to represent what has already been presented to God by Christ's sacrifice and also what God has accepted. To put it differently, it focuses on the results brought about by Christ. The Hebrew term **'peace (shalom)'** comprehends prosperity, welfare, joy and happiness, to which this fellowship offering points. Hence, we, the saved through Christ's sacrifice are as a result, privileged to feast and enjoy peace between God and man, as well as experience inner peace. This offering was the only sacrifice in which the offerer could partake in a communal meal. While in the burnt offering, all parts of the animal were placed on the altar, in this fellowship offering, only a portion is specified as **'a sacrifice made to the LORD by fire.'** The choice portion of inner parts and of the most tender parts was the Lord's. The fat and the inner parts were symbols of the excellence and energy of will, motives, emotions, affections, and all was divinely proved holy by fire. The fat was considered the better part of the animal. Hence, everything in Christ, such as the fat as His will and the blood as His life to the Lord, was dedicated as **'an aroma pleasing to the Lord'** (a sweat savour offering).

Fifthly, there are two non-pleasing aroma offerings, one of which is a **'sin offering'**, which speaks of the nature of sin. Leviticus 4 introduces an entirely new offering among other heathen nations, i.e., this sin offering. Significantly, the sin offering is said to be mentioned almost twice as often as the others. It was this offering, with which the High Priest went into the Most Holy Place once a year for the atonement of all the sins of the Israelites, including his own sins. This offering was commanded by the law to be offered during most of the feasts including the major feasts. There is a contrast between the burnt offering and the sin offering although both were made on the same altar. The former was voluntarily offered upwards to meet the demands of God's high standard, whereas the latter was necessarily poured out downwards to meet our needs to be free from a sin committed in ignorance. Thus, the sin offering denotes what Christ achieved on the cross to deliver us from the sinfulness of sin.

The other non-pleasing aroma offering is a **'guilt offering.'** The distinction between a guilt offering and a sin offering lies in that while the former refers to specific acts done against God and others, the latter refers to the root, the nature of sin itself from which such sinful acts proceed. In the sin offering, the offerer and the

victim were identified by the laying-on of hands on the victim and its emphasis was placed on **the condemnation of sin**, i.e., a resultant open admission of guilt. On the other hand, in the guilt offering, a **confession of sin** was the focal point because it had to do with secret sins.

In the reality of life, there are sins committed in ignorance. In such cases, sin tends to be more confined to the individual's knowledge and conscience. For example, many may claim "liberty", and yet fail to realise their own invasion of rights of others, such as going around parading, obstructing official duties, holding a demonstration, burning things and destroying other's property. In the Scripture, the withholding of tithe, the spreading of gossip through prayer and 'sins of omission' would all be undeniable sins, as James put it: *'Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins'* (James 4:17). Thus, concerning *'the guilt offering, which is most holy'* (Le.7:1), exactly as the offerer was reminded that the sacrifice is holy, so we are reminded of the important fact that Christ's most holy sacrifice of Himself once-for-all for us has completely done away with our uncountable sins and provided us with full forgiveness.

All the six basic offerings recorded in the first seven chapters of Leviticus have now been examined. When Christ came to the world, He said, *"Here I am, I have come to do your will"* (Heb.10:9), and His perfect sacrifice, thus, wonderfully superseded and replaced all previous Levitical sacrifices. Consequently, being justified and made holy, we, the followers of Christ are now daily experiencing the process of sanctification. While the Levitical priest always **stood** for service because his work was never completed, our great High Priest has already **sat down** at the right hand of God because His once-for-all offering was perfect, and atoned for all our sins for all times, and it completely satisfied God. By Christ's accomplishment of God's will (Christ's work as priest-victim on the cross), the gracious principle has been established that all those who believe in Christ are now eternally set apart to God. Since then, God sees and accepts every believer in Christ, and man's salvation is never achieved through his or her personal righteous deed, dedication, offering, effort, or feelings. For each believer, after his/her own confession of faith in the crucified, risen, and glorified Jesus as both Saviour and Lord, he is exhorted to patiently, faithfully and unswervingly hold fast to this confession until His glorious return unto earth. Today, meeting together with fellow-brethren for worship, prayer, testimony, and Bible study is an essential way for each believer to keep faith in Christ as the day of the Lord's return is fast approaching.

Having explored the perfection of Christ's own sacrifice, the author of the epistle to the Hebrews gives a stern warning of apostasy, the wilful sin of rejection of Christ's atoning sacrifice. Having obtained the knowledge of the truth through the Hebrew Bible and in the light of the New Testament, if we deliberately keep on sinning, there will be no more sacrifice for sins, no matter what excuses or reasons we claim. This warns the apostate of the peril of judgment and of raging fire. All those who reject Christ deserve to be punished because such a deed corresponds to the trampling of the Son of God under the foot and also to the insulting of *'the Spirit of grace.'* The following passage should be addressed to such apostates who turn their back on the truth that God had revealed. *'It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God'* (10:31). However, this warning should not be used as a proof-text of bible-thumpers to cause fear or accuse those whose sensitive consciences are condemned guilty because of their sense of failure to walk with the Lord.

Throughout the whole Bible, **apostasy** is distinguished from **the state of back-sliding**. Convicted of **'sins of omission'** or overwhelmed with failure, any believer might sometimes be guilty of back-sliding, however, this guilty conscience often draws the back-slider back to seeking of the Lord for deliverance. On the contrary, the apostate will not even seek the Saviour but rather hold the blood of Christ in contempt. Likewise, **"reward"** is distinguished from **"salvation."** While the latter is a one-sided gift from God by His grace, and is already possessed by everyone who believes in Christ from the very moment of a profession of faith, the former is to be given only when Christ returns according to individually produced fruits, as Christ promised: *"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done."* (Re.22:12). As the author quoted from Habakkuk 2:4 in confidence that those believers to whom he was addressing were *'not of those who shrank back and were destroyed, but of those who believed and were saved'* (Tense changed), and encouraged the then Jewish Christians to be faithful to Christ to the end, so it would be a good reminder for us as well here to reiterate our true profession of faith. The righteous will live by faith, i.e., we, Christ's followers are to wait patiently for His return, believing that we are unconditionally justified and saved by grace through faith and yet that we should be determined to continue to live a righteous and holy life by faith.