

VII. JESUS

*Gave His Life as a Guilt Offering for Us
According to the Pattern in Leviticus (Lev. 5).*

The regulations of the guilt offering were as follows: If someone had sinned against God or his neighbor privately, and in his conscience found himself guilty of wrongdoing of which others did not know (for authorities punished according to prescribed laws whatever was known throughout the land and city, which otherwise no sacrifice could rectify)—he went to the priest and confessed his private guilt. The priest, however, had to hold his tongue, for the Church does not judge hidden things.⁹⁹ Accordingly, the guilty man, being unnoticed, was secretly reconciled with the priesthood, in the case that he had sinned against God, or with his neighbor whom he had injured, and made full restitution to him. In addition to this, he punished himself and gave him a fifth part above the amount owed. Finally, he brought a guilt offering of a ram or goat without any blemish out of the flock, valued at two silver coins, that is, a thaler. This was handled in every way as the sin offering above, as is attested in chapter 7 below.

Now, God Himself enumerated three different cases in which such a guilt offering was to be made. The first was when someone was unfaithful with the tithe or did not keep a pledge that he had made to God during an illness, by which he brought spiritual good upon himself. Avoid unfaithfulness in the divine service, avoid the Church's property and the coals of God's altar. It would prosper you ill.

Second, if someone found that he had cheated his neighbor but did not know it for sure and could not ascertain exactly how great the loss was, and yet could not put his conscience to rest, he did not need to replace anything, since he did not know the precise penalty to pay. If he simply brought his guilt offering, and in so doing took comfort

99 *De occultis non judicat Ecclesia.*

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in the Messiah, he was able to put his conscience to rest. Behold how God is opposed to all doubting hearts! He desires us to have an entirely restful heart that is certain of God's grace, and says with St. Paul, "I am convinced"¹⁰⁰ (Rom. 8:38), and, "This is most certainly true" (1 Tim. 1:15).

Third, if someone consciously cheated his neighbor with false money, weights, measures, volumes, or goods, broke a promise, denied finding something, etc., he had to be reconciled with his neighbor, punish himself by paying the fifth part above what he owed, and have atonement made for him with a guilt offering.

All these cases and sacrifices thus pertain to a bad, wounded conscience, where "the conscience inwardly accuses itself."¹⁰¹ For many a man has a secret pang in his heart of which none in the world knows but himself. Dogs bark in his bosom, a worm gnaws at his heart. He could forget all if only this one thing had not been done. These are the hidden guilts of the heart with which a man worries and frets himself. Such miserable, melancholy souls were to be helped with a guilt offering. (I hold this opinion zealously, for it is full of comfort and does not contradict Holy Scripture.)¹⁰² The words "sin" and "guilt" are commonly used in Scripture for the same thing, but here they are distinguished. This is why there are difficult disputes about what every sacrificial offering properly was.¹⁰³ (If you like, read Ribera's *De Templo* 4.6, pp. 269–270.)¹⁰⁴

However, this guilt offering also points to Jesus Christ just as much as the previous sin offering did.

O Lord Jesus Christ, thank You for giving Your life for us as an *asham*, a guilt offering (Isa. 53:10). You can heal all the secret wounds of our bleeding conscience. With You there is plentiful redemption

100 *Certus sum.*

101 *Arguente se intus conscientia;* unmarked reference to Philo via Lapide, *Comm. in Lev. 6.*

102 *Hanc sententiam retineo studiosè, quia est plena consolationis, et scripturae non contradicit.*

103 *Intricatissimae disputationes de cujuslibet sacrificii proprio.*

104 Francisco de Ribera, *De Templo et de iis quae ad Templum pertinent* (1593).

(Ps. 130:7). Whoever with true faith takes comfort in Your guilt offering is forgiven all that he has done. He may set his heart at ease. He has certain peace with God.

You are the leaping goat. You came with a full leap from heaven to help us. Jeduthun is one of Your true names. You are justly called “Leaper,” as the Church sings on Ascension.¹⁰⁵ You are the one “leaping over the mountains”¹⁰⁶ (Song of Sol. 2:8). You made a blessed leap from the heart of the heavenly Father down beneath the chaste heart of Mary, thence to the manger in Bethlehem, to the land of Egypt, back to the Promised Land, up to the Jordan, throughout the whole country, and at last to Gethsemane. You climbed the high tree of the cross. Oh, what bitter branches You ate there! Chastisement lay upon You that we might have peace (Isa. 53:5). You bled; Your goat’s blood softened Your Father’s wrathful, diamond-hard heart, that He might be gracious to us. With the horns of Your cross You mightily knocked down the foes of our soul. You made a leap from the cross to the tomb, to hell, back to life, and finally up to the right hand of God’s majesty. You have the sharp eyes of a goat toward all Your friends. You are the blessed bellwether of Your Christian Church; You lead us to everlasting life. You are always with the flock of believing hearts, according to Your promise in Matthew 28:20 and 18:20. You are perfectly clean without spot. You abound in what we lack.

Just as the goat or ram had to be gotten and purchased for two holy silver coins, so I am able to get You for my own: first, by true faith; second, by devout and humble prayer.

However, just as satisfaction had to be made to the injured neighbor in addition to the guilt offering, so You by Your guilt offering have made right and proper reconciliation for us with God. But, as Augustine himself writes,¹⁰⁷ this does not mean that we now

105 I.e., in the Sequence for Ascension, “Summi triumphum Regis” (Notker, 9th c.), which similarly recounts the various “leaps” of Christ, and which is preserved in a number of Lutheran sources; see M. Carver, *Lutheran Sequences* (2019), no. 16, p. 43ff.

106 *Saliens in montibus*.

107 Aug., *Quaest. in Lev.* 5. PL 34:676.

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have the right to sin against our neighbor without fear, but rather repentance is required, so that, following Zacchaeus' example, every good is done to the neighbor that was previously injured. For the grace of God chastens us to renounce ungodliness (Titus 2:11-12). Otherwise our repentance would be utterly abominable hypocrisy and a scoundrel's repentance. When by faith we are reconciled with Your Father through Your guilt offering, then as gratitude we too are indebted to serve our neighbors and to treat them as You have treated our souls (Matt. 18:33).

O Lord Jesus, we thank You for Your invaluable guilt offering! Help us thereby to be rid of all guilt and not willingly to incur any further guilt either against You or against our neighbor. Amen.

VIII. JESUS

*Desires the Bright, Pure Doctrine
and the Bright, Pure Consolation of His sufferings and Death
Never to Be Extinguished in the Blessed Church and Our Hearts,
Just Like the Fire on the Altar of Burnt Offering (Lev. 6:1–13)*

God said three times that the fire on the altar of burnt offering was not to be extinguished; it was to be kept burning day and night. For this reason, the priest was also ordered to add more wood to it every morning. No other fire was to go on this altar; only the fire that had fallen from heaven at Aaron's consecration was to be kept on it, as stated later in Leviticus 9:24. Nadab and Abihu will shamefully offend against it (Lev. 10:2).

Hence it was that the Chaldeans revered fire as a god, but the priest of Canopus aptly put them to shame with his perforated water-jar.¹⁰⁸ From this too came the Romans' apery of having an ever-burning flame watched by their nuns. Let us thank God for delivering us from such pagan blindness, and accordingly seek the true understanding and spiritual sense of this constantly burning flame. O Lord Jesus, Your Gospel is a piercing flame (Luke 12:49; Jer. 23:29). It is never to be extinguished in Your Church. Your death is to be proclaimed until You come (1 Cor. 11:26). The doctrine of Your bitter sufferings on the altar of burnt offering of the holy cross, on which You burned in the fire of Your Father's wrath, brings true light and life into our heart, for it is always accompanied by the cooperating power of the Holy Spirit, who thereby conveys into our heart His doctrine, consolation, and holiness, and kindles in our heart the brilliant light of true faith. This doctrine tolerates no impurity in itself nor in our heart, but purges everything like a burning fire. This doctrine brings us the bright knowledge of God and of ourselves; yea, it warms us so that we are filled with a

¹⁰⁸ Ruf., *Eccl. Hist.* 11.26.

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desire to love God and our neighbor with a fervent love; yea, it lights the way through temporal death to eternal life. This is why it must always be maintained in earnest. St. Paul wished to know nothing else (1 Cor. 2:2). He wished to boast in nothing except this (Gal. 6:14). This is why everyone had to add his piece of wood to it. Every pious Christian, according to his means, is to help support the pastoral office, to cultivate the Gospel devoutly, and to pray earnestly that God would keep it pure and unadulterated. The fires and consolations of others bring nothing but calamity.

Take heed lest men with base alloy
The heavenly treasure should destroy;
This counsel I bequeath you.¹⁰⁹

O God, heavenly Father, let not the fire on the altar of the cross of Jesus Christ go out in my heart, lest I be cast into the outer darkness. Help me in my thoughts not to forget His bitter death. Let Your Son, my Consolation and Life, continually dwell in my heart when I pray and when I suffer cross, tribulation, and death. Even if my misery tarries till the night, and till the morning waken, yet help me to take comfort every hour, day and night, in His precious merit. Keep me, I pray, from all other fires, from all other consolations, apart from that precious altar of burnt offering which is the cross of Jesus Christ. For “there is no other name given to us men, by which we can be saved” (Acts 4:12).

(Pertinent here is my *Timetable of the Passion*, which shows how comfort is to be found in Christ’s sufferings at every hour of the day and night.)¹¹⁰

109 “Nun Freut euch, lieben Christen gmein” (Luther, 1523), Wack 3:5 (no. 2); tr. R. Massie, 1854, alt.

110 *Horoscopia passionis Domini* (1608); tr. and pub. by M. Carver as *Timetable of the Passion* (2023).

IX. JESUS

*Is to Be Buried Outside the City and Cause Our Ashes
to Be Counted as Relics in the Sight of God and
Assured of the Hope of the Resurrection (Lev. 6:11).*

The priest had to put on his alb and remove the ashes from the altar, and then, changing into his everyday attire, take the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. This properly relates to the burial of Jesus Christ.

Dearest Lord Jesus, when You wished to remove our sin by Your sufferings, Herod mocked You with a white robe. Pilate had a purple cloak put on You as well. But when You were led outside the city, Your own clothes were put back on You. The changing of Your clothes reminds me that You would win me the robe of righteousness, the garments of salvation. You were led outside the gate, that we might be led into heaven. You were buried outside the city in a new grave which had not been polluted with any dead body. The clean ash heap in this passage was made to indicate this in advance. The Jews rejoiced, thinking that You would become dust and ashes like other men. But no, You remained clean from corruption, as Psalm 16:10 prophesied, and by Your joyous resurrection were sanctified for the whole world.

With this You won the comforting hope of the resurrection of our flesh for us poor earthworms, who because of sin must return to dust and ashes. Thus You saved our ashes; our ashes are to be utter relics. You will surely take our ashes into Your care. Not a speck of them shall be lost. Though we may be thrown into an unclean place by the enemies of the Gospel, every speck of us lies before Your eyes in a clean, safe place, and we are assured of eternal life by Your death and burial. Thanks to You forever because of this! In honor of this comfort, all Christians should also keep their churchyards and little resting places neat and clean.

X. JESUS,

*By His Sacrificial Offering on the Cross,
Feeds All the Hungry Souls in the Church Who Cling to Him
with a Manly Faith and Priestly Heart (Lev. 6:14–18).*

I will not repeat what has already been said above in Meditation 2 concerning the food offering, but only pick up the gleanings of what is added to it here.

After Aaron burned his portion of the food offering to the Lord God, he and his male children were to consume the rest of it in a holy place. No one else was to partake of it nor even to touch it.

O Lord Jesus, You are the Bread of Life. Your sacrificial offering on the cross is the mighty food of my soul, that I may not die of eternal hunger. Your believing Christians are the consecrated priests who assuredly partake of Your salvation (1 Peter 2:9; Rev. 1:6). In Baptism they are mightily consecrated into their spiritual priesthood by Your blood and Holy Spirit. They also strive as much as possible to live a restrained, priestly life. And though they are not all males as to their sex—for women who believe in Christ are heirs together of the grace of life (1 Peter 3:7), “in Christ there is neither male nor female” (Gal. 3:28), but only “new creations” (2 Cor. 5:17)—they all have a manly faith, spirit, and courage to remain faithful to You in distress and death (Matt. 10:22; Rev. 2:10). They are strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might (Eph. 6:10) they overcome all that opposes them. Yea, they abide with one accord in the holy place of Your blessed Church. For outside the Church, as outside Noah’s ark, there is no salvation.¹¹¹ As You Yourself said, “Whoever is not with Me is against Me, and whoever does not gather with Me scatters” (Luke 11:23). O Lord Jesus, be the blessed food of my heart! Give me a priestly heart and life. Grant me manly resolve to love You. Help me

¹¹¹ *Extra Ecclesiam, perinde ut extra arcam Noae, nulla est salus*; cf. *Cypr. Epist. 72 de bapt.* 21, PL 3:1123; *Aug. De bapt.* 4.24, PL 43:170.

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to be a member of Your blessed Church which You have consecrated with Your blood and Spirit. Kindle in my heart true faith, that I may be fed unto eternal life by Your sacrificial offering on the cross; for otherwise no one shall partake of You. “Whoever does not believe is condemned” (Mark 16:16): “Then death for life he shall receive.”¹¹²

112 “Jesus Christus unser Heiland” (M. Luther, 1524, after J. Hus), st. 3, line 4; Wack 3:9f. (no. 10). Line 3 is a paraphrase of the verse immediately preceding this quotation.

XI. JESUS'

*Sacrifice Is a Perfect Atonement Offering;
It Needs No Improvement or Addition (Lev. 6:19–23).*

The food offering of a priest at his consecration had to remain completely whole and so to be burnt. No one could do anything further with it. O Lord Jesus, You are the High Priest of Your Church. Your sacrifice on the altar of the cross is the spiritual food of every believing heart. This is a perfect atonement offering; it needs no improvement, no addition. No one can add anything to it. Therefore You said on the cross, "It is finished."¹¹³ And the Epistle to the Hebrews bears witness that by a single offering You perfected forever those who are being sanctified (Heb. 10:14). That is, You redeemed them completely. You secured for them an eternal redemption (9:12). You would give Your glory to no other (Isa. 42:8). And what Your glory is, You Yourself say: "I, even I blot out their transgression" (Isa. 43:25), and: "I tread the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one is with Me" (63:3). The priest and Levite could do nothing with the wounded man. The Samaritan alone received the glory (Luke 10:33). O Lord Jesus, You are the Good Samaritan.

Deep wounds, O Jesus, fill my heart;
Apply Thy good Samaritan art!
For in Thine open side I see
Pure wine and oil prepared for me.

Let flow Thy blood and water clean
And bring me to Thy Christian inn;
My soul and body keep and tend,
And I will thank Thee without end.

113 *Consummatum est.*

*Emunda et sana, JESU, dilecte viator,
 Vino oleoque tuo, vulnera nostra, precor.
 Vinum oleumque tuum, de pectore sanguis et unda est,
 Haec animae, JESU, sunt medicina mea.*

*Vulnera patris Adæ SOLUS Samarita sigavit;
 Unius Christi viscera sancta gemunt.
 En spe praetereunt vana, Levita, Sacerdos,
 SOLIUS JESU me pia cura beat.*

In the gospel reading of the royal wedding feast (Matt. 22:4) and of the great banquet (Luke 14:17), the declaration is made that “everything is ready.”¹¹⁴ Therefore we do not need to prepare anything. With You there is plentiful redemption (Ps. 130:7). From Your fullness we may all receive (John 1:16). You are the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). In one Seed, not in many, were we to be blessed (Gal. 3:16). By the one Man’s obedience the many are made righteous (Rom. 5:19). Thus Chrysostom says, “There is no other sacrifice anymore. One has cleansed us; outside of it there is only hellfire.”¹¹⁵ When John Ferus¹¹⁶ (otherwise called “Wilde”), the renowned preacher of Mainz, explained Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 6:20, “You were bought with a price,” he said, “Know that this is a great and sufficient ransom for our sins.”¹¹⁷ For this reason the arrogant Jebusites ought to be ashamed in their hearts to speak so irreverently of Christ’s suffering and insultingly twist St. Paul’s words in Colossians 1:24, where he says, “I am filling up in my flesh what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of His body, which is the Church.” St. Paul is not speaking of Christ’s sufferings, but of the afflictions of His Church. Much was still lacking then in St. Paul’s time. Oh, how much she has had to endure until this time, and how much she will have to endure before the Last Day! For we must be conformed to the likeness of Christ and first suffer and die with Him

114 *Omnia parata.*

115 *Non est jam aliud sacrificium, unum nos purgavit, post illud ignis et gehenna;* Chrys. *Hom. 20 in Heb.*, PG 63:143.

116 Johann Wild (1497–1554), Franciscan rhetorician and commentator.

117 *Scito esse pretium pro peccatis, imo magnum et sufficiens.*

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before we inherit heaven with Him. And the Lord Jesus receives the Church's afflictions precisely as if they were directed at Himself (Acts 9:4). St. Paul endured his share; he drank down the appointed cup of his cross, as he describes in 2 Corinthians 4:10. We too will have to endure our share, but this does not improve upon Christ's sufferings. It does not earn us salvation but only happens as a fitting act of gratitude.

(Note: Anything else necessary to know about the food offering is explained above in Medit. 3.)