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THE BODY OF CHRIST

QUESTION. – Is the "body" mentioned in Hebrews 10:5 and Hebrews 7:27 the same?

Answer. – The body which God prepared for sacrifice may properly be viewed from two standpoints: First, the Father prepared the body of Jesus, in that He was born holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, and of the human family through His mother. This is the foundation of the whole matter. But the Apostle Peter and also the Apostle Paul inform us that God foreknew the Church, "the Body of Christ," and, therefore, foreknew the sufferings of the Body as well as the sufferings of the Head – foreknew our share in the sufferings and also in His glory.

In speaking therefore of the body which God prepared we should properly enough think how the Father prepared a body for Jesus which was actually, physically perfect and corresponding to the body of Adam, who was afterward condemned, and also prepared the way by which the "Body of Christ" should be justified from the sinfulness of the flesh, that thus He might offer not only Himself, [R4965 : page 46] the Head, but also "the Church, His Body," a "living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God."

TYPICAL AND ANTITYPICAL ATONEMENT DAY SACRIFICES FOR SIN CONTRASTED

In Hebrews 10:10 the Apostle is contrasting the atonement day sacrifice of the typical high priest with the antitypical atonement day sacrifice of the antitypical High Priest, Jesus. The typical high priest needed once every year, repeatedly (not daily), to offer up sacrifices. The first part of the sacrifice was for his own sin, and the second part of the sacrifice was for the sins of the people. The first part was the bullock, and the second part the offering of the goat. These two

offerings constituted the one sacrifice for sin on the day of atonement! And so, in the antitype, the offering of our Lord Jesus, when He offered up Himself, was for "himself," that is, for His Body, those who are to be His Church, the household of faith. And then, a further part of His sacrifice has been the offering up of these members of His Body, in harmony with their wills and in harmony with the Divine provision.

Thus the antitypical atonement day sacrifices for sin have been in progress for eighteen hundred years. The special merit of the sacrifice was that which our Lord Himself offered, through which our offerings are made acceptable. It is one sacrifice in the sense that it is all one Body of one Priest that is offered, for the Apostle said, "We are partakers of the sufferings of the Anointed," and, "if we suffer with Him we shall reign with Him"; "if one member suffer all members suffer."

ALL OFFERING MUST BE DONE BY THE PRIEST

In Hebrews 7:27 the Apostle said, "This He did *once* when he offered up Himself." The question arises, To whom does this refer? Does it mean Jesus, and the members of His Body offering up Himself? We answer, No. The members of the Body do not offer up themselves; they present themselves; but the offering, so far as God is concerned, must be done by the Priest, Jesus, the "High Priest of our profession." The Apostle says that this He did once, and we answer, Here the thought is *one fulfilment* of the one type. In the type there were two sacrifices offered, and it is here called His sacrifice.

Our Lord offered up Himself at Jordan, and He offered up all the members of His Body, the Church, at Pentecost. The offering of Himself personally at Jordan was accepted of the Father, and the remainder of Christ's sacrifice was merely the fulfilling of the terms of the sacrifice. So the presentation of the Church before the Father was accomplished at Pentecost, though it has required the entire Gospel Age to complete the sacrifice.

This, too, was shown in the atonement day type: The high priest, after offering up the bullock, took the blood into the Holy and later into the Most Holy and sprinkled it on behalf of himself and his household – the members of his body and the household of faith – the underpriests and the Levites.

Next the high priest came to the door of the Tabernacle and slew the goat, representing the acceptance of justified believers as His Body and their consecration to death. In the type this did not represent the second coming of Christ, but merely His manifestation in connection with the sacrifice of the Body, which is the Church. In the antitype our Lord as the High Priest manifested His power in the Church at Pentecost by sending the Holy Spirit upon them and thus giving the intimation that their sacrifice was made and acceptable in the Father's sight. All of the Church who have since come in were counted in there – just as in our Lord's prayer He said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for those also who shall believe on Me through their word." Similarly the acceptance of the Church at Pentecost as joint-sacrificers, as part of Christ's sacrifice, has continued ever since and we are members of His Body, each in his turn being sacrificed until the entire sacrifice of the Great High priest once for all shall have been accomplished, and that accomplishment, we believe, is near.

The expression, "If one member of the Body of Christ suffer, all the members suffer with it" (1 Cor. 12:26), does not, of course, signify that the dead members of the Church would suffer with the living members, nor that those not yet begotten of the Spirit would suffer with the Apostles, nor that members in different parts of the world would suffer with the other members of whom they were ignorant. It merely means that there is such a sympathy and union and fellowship in the Body of Christ that each is intimately and deeply interested in each other member, so that the interests of one are the interests of all. As, for instance, where there are two or three of the Lord's people in fellowship, as a little ecclesia or class, they are, in this sense of the word, a Body of Christ and are interested in each other, and suffer with

each other in the tribulations, persecutions and difficulties of life. And, in a larger sense of the word, any of the members of the Body of Christ, in any part of the world, learning of the sufferings of other members of the Body would correspondingly feel an interest, a sympathy and fellowship in their sufferings, or in their joys.

NOT A PART OF THE RANSOM

In the statement, "A body hast thou prepared me," we must be careful not to read in what is not stated. It is not stated, "A body hast thou prepared me as a ransom-price," [R4966 : page 46] but, "A body hast thou prepared me" (Heb. 10:5), "for the suffering of death." (Heb. 2:9.) The *suffering of death* on the part of our Lord Jesus *constituted the ransom-price* for the sins of the whole world. But the Body, which is the Church, the Father prepares through justification for association with Jesus in the "suffering of death," but this does not constitute the Church partakers in the ransom-price. Only one ransom-price was necessary, and that was one perfect man's death, and that had already been arranged for before the Church was invited to become joint-sufferers and joint-heirs with the Redeemer as His members.

The word "sacrifice" seems to be confusing to some. We are exhorted to present our bodies living sacrifices, but our presentation of our bodies to the Lord should not be confounded with the Lord's presentation of us. Going back to the type we find that two goats were presented to the Lord at the door of the Tabernacle. They were presented to be sacrificed, and so, when speaking of them, one might properly say, Those are the sacrificial goats; and whoever presented the goats might in one sense of the word be said to be the sacrificer.

But the word sacrifice, when used in the sense of devotion, or setting apart for sacrifice, should not be confounded with the sacrificing work by the high priest. The goats were not sacrificed merely because they were presented or devoted. God dealt not with the people, but with the priest, and only when the priest had slain the

animal was it sacrificed, from the Divine standpoint. Then, and only then, was it really acceptable to God as a sacrifice.

Applying this, then, we may desire to come to God and learn that now is the acceptable day, now is the time when the Body of Christ may be devoted, or presented to the Lord. But something more is necessary than our presentation, and that further thing is the work which is [R4966 : page 47] accomplished for us by the High Priest, Jesus; namely, His acceptance, or His endorsement of our consecration, and the presentation of our offering as a part of His sacrifice. When the High Priest presents us with His merit imputed, then, and not until then, does our offer become a "sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God."

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