

Goat Helps Save World

The headlines in the daily news are very troubling. The collapse of the Soviet Union has resulted in the outbreak of civil wars. More unrest looms in the future. In the West concern is generated by the vast stockpile of Soviet nuclear weapons. Who really is or will be in control of "the button?" The plight of the common people of the former USSR does not leave us unmoved. Our hearts are troubled by the forecasts of riots and impending starvation.

Domestic crises face us in this country also. Lingering economic recession has resulted in massive layoffs. The list of corporations going bankrupt, restructuring or cutting work forces grows daily. Tens of thousands of jobs have been lost. Tens of thousands of families are undergoing severe hardship. Recent surveys show that the mood of the country about its economic future is darker than at any time since the Great Depression.

Drug and alcohol abuse are claiming increasing numbers of lives. The spread of AIDS is mushrooming—with no sure hope of a cure in sight. The environment is staggering under the weight of decades of reckless abuse. Forests are steadily being gouged off the face of the earth. The ozone layer, which protects us from the sun's harmful rays, is being destroyed.

In these stormy times great leaders are needed to guide the nations to security. Ironically, just when the need is so great, many leaders are now being judged incompetent or ineffective. Others are caught in scandal. But there is one leader, soon to be revealed to the world, who is more than capable of solving all of Earth's ills. Jesus Christ who in his times will show who is the King of those who reign as kings and Lord of those who rule as lords. (1 Tim. 6:14,15, NAS margin)

The government of the world will at long last be upon the shoulders of Jesus (Isa. 9:6) and his associates. Those who have suffered with him in the present time are the ones who will be kings and lords with him at his appearing. 2 Tim. 2:11,12; 3:12 (NAS)

The Sufferings Foretold

Jesus said, "Moses wrote of me" (John 5:46). After his death and

resurrection he spoke to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and then to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Lk. 24:26,27

Moses wrote prophetically of Jesus in the Tabernacle worship services. There, in the drama of the Day of Atonement sacrifices, a type or picture of Christ's sufferings was portrayed. The blood of a bullock and a goat was used to make atonement for the sins of the people. (This "the Lord's goat" should not be confused with the "scapegoat" which was not sacrificed as was the bullock.)

The blood of the bullock was taken into the Most Holy of the Tabernacle first. It opened the way for the blood of the Lord's goat which would follow. Then, after the blood of the goat was offered, the fat of the bullock and goat were burned—a sweet savour. The carcasses of those animals were burned outside the camp. This gave off a pungent and highly objectionable odor to the Israelites.

The bullock obviously represented our Lord Jesus. Why was a goat also offered? Who did the Lord's goat represent? The Apostle Paul helps to clarify these questions in the book of Hebrews.

"We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." Hebrews 13:10-13

The Apostle shows that we (who are serving in the antitype of the Tabernacle) can partake of the spiritual altar. Those who served in the type could not partake of the true altar while offering typical sacrifices. The bodies of the typical sacrifices were burned outside the camp. The stench of their burning was a reproach unto those dwelling in the camp of Israel. Paul reveals that Jesus fulfilled the Day of Atonement sacrifice—bearing the reproach. "The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." Rom. 15:3 Paul also teaches that we bear the reproach with Jesus. "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp bearing his reproach." Heb. 13:13

The Lord's Goat Typifies the Church

Christ's brethren, the true Church, bear the same reproach that he bore in fulfillment of the type. Therefore, we are represented in the picture of the offering of the bullock and goat. Our role was pictured by the Lord's goat and Jesus' role by the bullock.

Many scriptures are brought to a full clarity when we perceive the role of the Church in the sin offering picture. Referring to his life of sacrifice and impending crucifixion Jesus said "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" John 18:11 Christ's followers drink of that same cup—the cup of sharing in his sufferings. "Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of." Mark 10:39 "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (the participation) in the blood of Christ?" 1 Cor. 10:16

The stench of the burning bodies of bulls and goats pictures how the world (which knoweth us not) views our life of sacrifice. "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one we are a savour of death unto death, and to the other a savour of life unto life." 2 Cor. 1:15,16

Hard sayings are opened up and made plain. "Fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake." Col. 1:24 Jesus' sacrifice as the bullock was perfect—complete. What then was behind or lacking in the afflictions of Christ? It was the fulfilling of the goat picture by Jesus' body members. "For as we have many members in one body, ...so we, being many (individual members) are one body in Christ. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." Rom. 12:4,5; 1 Cor. 12:27 We thus are to be heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him; that we may be also glorified together. Rom 8:17

The Goat Helps Jesus Save the World

All the present troubles that plague mankind will be thoroughly corrected by the rule of Christ. Jesus the head and the church as his body will rule with strict justice and tender mercy. God will make his covenant with mankind through them just as he made a covenant for the blessing of Israel. After the bullock and goat were completely offered the people were blessed. After Jesus and his body members are completely offered the blessings of God will be bestowed upon the remainder of men.

2 Corinthians chapter 6 is thrilling from this perspective. "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." vs. 2 Commonly the emphasis on this scripture is that now is THE accepted time, now is THE day of salvation. Looking at the original Greek, the word "the" is not found. The proper rendering should be "now is an accepted time, now is a day of salvation." Now is the accepted time to call a few to a spiritual reward. The rest of mankind will have their day of salvation during Christ's earthly Kingdom. Isaiah confirms both the proper language and thought of 2 Corinthians 6:2.

"Thus saith the LORD, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a

day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages." Isaiah 49:8 The apostle's application of this scripture to us proves that we, Christ's followers, are given to establish a covenant of the people.

As the goat shared with the bullock in renewing the Covenant of Israel—so we share with Jesus in establishing the covenant of blessing for the world (Isa. 49:8). By working with Jesus we will help establish the earth. By assisting Jesus in the conquest of sin those heritages desolated by death will be re-inherited. Thus it is that a lowly "goat," by God's grace, helps save the world.

© 1991-1998 Bible Students Congregation of New Brunswick