

IT IS SETTLED!

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13b)

By Howell Lasseter

Since all (both Jew and Gentile) are under sin (Romans 3:9,23), a perfect sacrifice was needed in order for mankind's sins to be forgiven. From the beginning of time, sacrifices were offered. Abel offered a *"more excellent"* sacrifice than Cain. Abel's sacrifice was accepted; Cain's was rejected. One brother (Cain) rose up against another brother (Abel), and killed him. Read Genesis 4:1-15. We learn in Hebrews 11:4 that Abel *"offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."* But, the *"more excellent"* sacrifice that Abel offered was not the 'perfect sacrifice' man needed.

What, then, was that perfect sacrifice? It was not the sacrifice offered each year by the high priest for his sins (Hebrews 9:7) and the sins of the Jewish people. It was Jesus, of Whom it is said, *"Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"* (Hebrews 5:8,9). If the blood of bulls and goats could be used for the purifying of the flesh yearly (as Hebrews 9:13 teaches), notice what verse 14 states: *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*

Is it needful that the sacrifice made for us be repeated each year? No, it is not. Would there be any benefit for any one today to offer the blood of a bull or goat as sacrifice to God? No, there would not. Why not? Because the perfect sacrifice has been made for **all** men, both Jews and Gentiles.

Let us examine more closely the sacrifice made for our sins. Jesus assembled with the 12 men He had chosen to take His message to the world. During the Passover feast, He says one of the 12 would betray Him. Immediately, Judas Iscariot went out, and for 30 pieces of silver, led those who wanted Jesus dead to Him, betraying Him with a kiss. Jesus was taken that night, put on trial before Caiaphas the high priest, Annas who had been high priest, Herod the king, and Pilate. Pilate had Jesus scourged (beaten with straps that would cut the flesh open on a man's back). Also that night, Jesus was slapped, spit upon, reviled, ridiculed. A crown of thorns and a purple robe were placed on Him. He was struck with a reed upon the crown of thorns. When given the choice, the Jews cried out for a jailed criminal, a murderer, to be freed and Jesus crucified. The crowd prevailed; and Jesus was sentenced to die on Calvary's cruel cross. He carried the cross as far as He could. The cross was laid on the ground, and the only man to ever live a perfect life was placed on it. Nails were driven into His hands and His feet. The cross was lifted, then dropped into the hole prepared for it. Was it over? Had blood been shed for man? No, not until six hours later when the Roman soldier saw Jesus was dead and pierced the side of our Savior. Then - and only then - was His blood shed **in His death**. Yes, a better sacrifice, a perfect sacrifice, has been offered for each of us!