

Word 24: עֹלָה ('*olah*) The burnt offering

There are a number of Hebrew terms we render as sacrifice, with each possessing a nuance of its own and a specific context for use. Terms include (though are not limited to):

- *Zebach* (זָבַח), usually understood to refer to an animal sacrifice;
- *Ishshah* (אִשָּׁה), an offering usually a burnt offering;
- *Chag* (חַג), a festival sacrifice;
- *Tamyid* (תָּמִיד) the daily sacrifice
- *Minchah* (מִנְחָה) a tithing sacrifice;
- '*olah* (עֹלָה) a daily burnt offering.

Meaning in use

Of all of the offerings '*olah* has been chosen this evening as:

- Noah offers '*olah* following his salvation from the Flood (Gen.8:20).
- Abraham on Mount Moriah offers an '*olah* as the substitute for his son (Gen.22:13).
- It was part of the consecration of priests (Exo.29:18).
- It is presented as the most important.
- It was a sacrifice of atonement (Lev.1:4; 16:24), where death brings forgiveness of sin. It could also be used for thanksgiving or in the making of a vow (Num 15:3).
- It is distinctive as the burning meant that it was wholly given to God.

Word 25: נָחַם (*Nacham*) The great sigh

- *Shoob* (שׁוּב) = repentance.
- Used 1058 times, it describes a physical return (Gen.8:9), a mental recall (Lam.3:21) and a spiritual turning to God (Eze.18:21, 23).

Meaning in use

- Occurring 108 times *Nacham* literally means 'to sigh deeply'. It can signify deep regret or be used to describe comforting or consoling (Gen.5:29; 24:67; 37:35; 1Ch.7:22). Often used to describe compassion, or grief.
- When *Nacham* is translated as repent a very different interpretation is presented (e.g. Gen.6:6; Exo.32:12, 14; Deu.32:36; Jdg.2:18; 1Sa.15:11, 29).

Class 5: Cleanliness matters

Psalm 51 and the importance of being clean

- Clean is usually 'Christianised' into terms such as sanctification.
- Psalm 51 uses three different types of cleanliness.

Verse 1: Being clean

- *Hesed* = unbreakable, covenant-founding love that will not let us go
- *Chanan* (חָנַן) = mercy resultant from pity (Psa.51:1; 109:12)
- *Racham* (רָחַם) = mercy emanating from compassion (Psa.25:6; 40:11; 51:1; 69:16; 103:4; Isa.54:8, 10; 63:7; Jer.16:5; Lam.3:22; Dan.1:9; Hos.2:19; Zec.7:9).

Word 20: מָחָה (*Machah*) To erase or blot out

- Occurring 36 times *Machah* is used to describe a form of cleanliness.
- Literally it means to wipe away, as when you clean dishes or erase what was on a whiteboard.

Meaning in use

- The idea of wiping sin away, like wiping debris from a dish parallels the use of the term to describe the removal of Jerusalem from the land (2Ki.21:13) and the intention of God to wipe man from the face of the earth in the Flood (Gen.6:7; 7:4, 23).
- This idea of wiping out is used in relation to the books of God (Exo.32:33).

Word 21: כָּבַס (*Kabas*) To trample/ beat clean

Kabas occurs 51 times, most commonly associated with the washing of clothes (Gen.49:11), often prior to, or during religious occasions (Exo. 19:10, 14; Lev.6:27; 11:25, 28, 40).

Meaning in use

- The majority of the uses occur in the books of Leviticus (31 times) and Numbers (8 times). It is linked to the use of soap (Jer.4:14; Mal.3:2) and those who professionally washed clothes (2Ki.18:17; Isa.7:3; 36:2).
- In Psalm 51:2 we have a Hiphil imperative, which adds a sense of intensity.
- Literally it reads 'cause me to be greatly cleaned' and often rendered 'wash me thoroughly'.
- Unlike the accounting work of *Machah* this makes a difference to the man himself.

Word 22: טָהַר (*Taher*) To be clean/ pure

- David's habitual sinfulness, his *chattahth*, requires a further form of cleansing.
- He needs *Taher* so that he may be considered pure.
- There are other terms for purification, however *Taher* is a ceremonial requirement

Meaning in use

- Used 94 times *Taher* has a religious usage from the outset (Gen.35:2).
- With a ceremonial/ cultic use it occurs most often in Leviticus (43 times) and Numbers (10 times).
- It is a term used of those clean of disease (Leviticus 13), but most commonly it refers to being considered clean from sin (Leviticus 12 and 14).
- *Taher* was also used during times of public renewal, such as during the return under Nehemiah in preparation for the Passover (Ezr.6:20).
- It compares the utter purity of God to men (Job.4:17)
- *Taher* describes a status that allows people access to the presence of God.
- Being clean and being holy are not the same thing (Deu.23:14; Jos.3:5).
- David fears the loss of the presence of God due to a lack of cleanliness (Psa.51:11)

Repeating the terms

- The need to be clean compels David to repeat in reverse his threefold cry in vss. 7-9.
- Yet, this is insufficient and he initially simply asks God to look away.
- Vs.10 declares a need for the creation of something new (cf. Jer.24:7; Eze.11:19; 36:26).

Word 23: צַדִּיקָה (*Tsadiqah*) Righteousness

- Used 157 times it is a term that primarily describes God and everything he does.
- In a secondary sense it is used to describe the society and people who were to reflect God in their conduct.

Meaning in use

- A nuance when comparing Testaments.
- Similar in the context of the Kingdom of God (Rom.14:17; Heb.1:8; 2Pe.3:13 cf. Psa.97:2; Jer.23:5), who God is and what he does (Rev.19:11 cf. Psa.71:19; Dan.9:14).
- The context of New Testament lends itself to using righteousness to describe the transformation that has taken place in the believer (Rom.6:18 cf. 10:4; Rev.9:8) and the lives that were to be lived accordingly (1Jhn.2:29; 3:7, 10).
- This understanding can lead to some difficulty when applied to the OT (e.g. Deu.6:25).
- The OT righteousness is not primarily about salvation but the nature of God.

The nature of God

- The key is found the fact that righteousness in the Old Testament is about God and not about us.
- Righteousness is intrinsic to the nature of God (Mic.7:9; Mal.4:2).
- It is one of the titles of God (*El-Tzadik*; Psa.129:4 cf. Ezr.9:15; Lam.1:8).
- He cannot act in any other way (Deut.32:4; Psa.98:9).
- His righteousness is a revelation that allows us to know what is right.
- It is not about status but our desire to be more like God.