

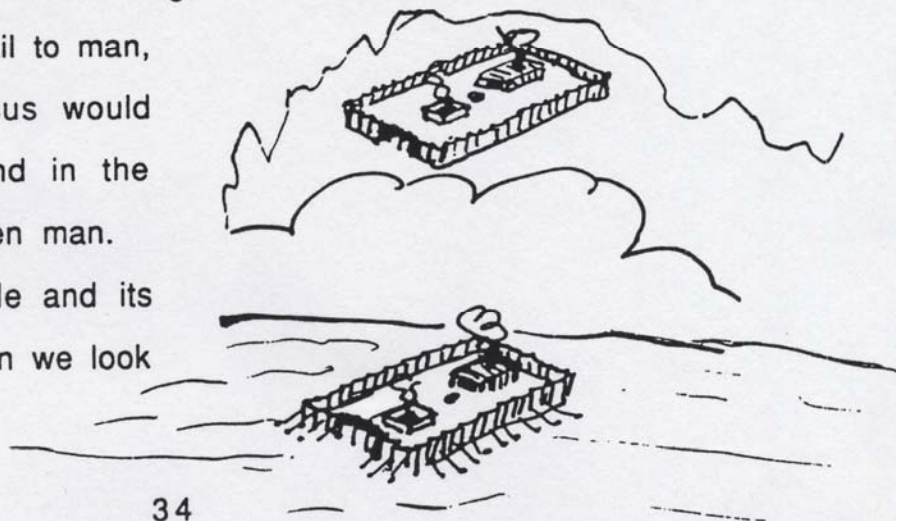
CHAPTER 3

AN OVERVIEW OF THE SANCTUARY SERVICE

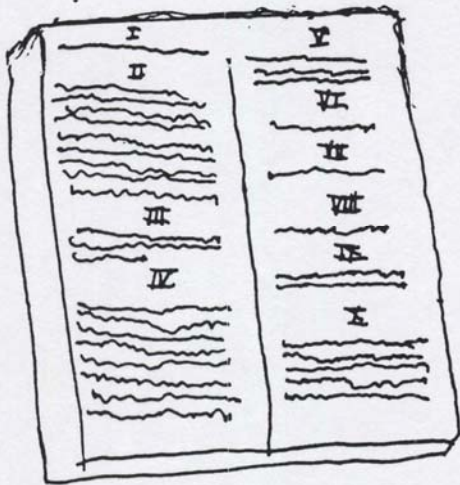
The Bible describes three earthly sanctuaries, or temples, all of which were patterned after the original in heaven. First was the portable one built by Moses. Solomon built the second one in Jerusalem on a much larger scale. Solomon's temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in the 6th century B.C. Ezekiel gives a detailed description of another temple, but it was never built. The Jews later rebuilt the temple on the same site, beginning its construction in 457 B.C. This became the third and final structure. Herod refurbished this sanctuary as a gift to the Jews during the time of Christ, and it became known as Herod's temple. This was the temple in which Jesus worshipped on His visits to Jerusalem. The Romans destroyed this temple in 70 A.D., and it has never been rebuilt. The only part of this sanctuary that now remains is the "wailing wall." A wall used to shore up the temple's ancient foundation.

The first sanctuary, the one Moses built, was a miniature patterned after the heavenly one. The continuing work of the earthly sanctuary, which God revealed in detail to man, represented the work Jesus would carry on in the earth, and in the heavenly sanctuary for fallen man.

The need for a temple and its services is understood when we look



into the Most Holy compartment of the temple and see within the ark the Ten Commandments written with the finger of God. These Ten

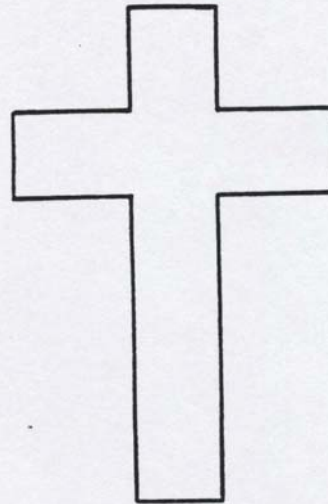


Commandments are a transcript of God's character, love. God's love is a consuming fire to those not in harmony with His law. Therefore when man violated the law, God left man's immediate presence because love was violated, and life was forfeited. Isaiah said it is our sins that separate us from God.(16) What would a loving God do to restore man to His image and character? What would God do to ward off the natural consequences that man

would reap because of his sin?

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, they, along with their descendents, became unloving people subject to death, the natural consequence of sin. God, in His love, stayed the execution and gave man probationary time in which he could, if he desired, choose love and

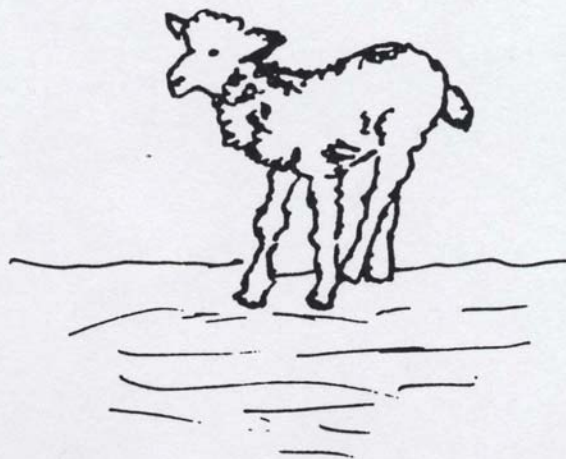
eternal life again. God needed to reveal to fallen man His love and plan for complete and full restoration of sinners. The sanctuary was in part for this purpose.

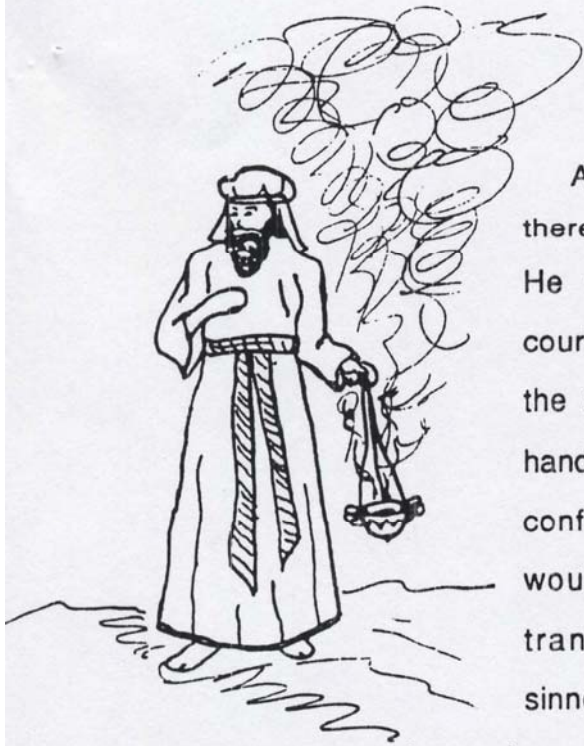


Let us now look at God's plan, as revealed in the sanctuary. For example, an Israelite stole an ax from his neighbor. With the sanctuary set up in the midst of Israel visible to all, his mind transported him into the Most Holy compartment of the temple and he envisioned the Ten Commandments written by God. One of the Ten said, "Thou shalt not steal."(17) He recognized he had broken one of the Ten Commandments and the transgression of this law was sin.(18) The wages of sin is death.(19) therefore he was condemned to die as the natural consequence. How could he be free from the condemnation of the law? Paul wrote that without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin.(20) Someone would have to die for violation of the law, Who?

The sinner was told to bring a substitute sacrifice which would take his place in paying the penalty. God specifically designated this sacrifice according to each case, taking into account the wealth or poverty of the sinner. In this case we will use a lamb as an example.

First, the Israelite must acknowledge he had broken the law. He would then repent. Repentance is not only sorrow for the act, but a turning away from it. He would return the ax to the victim with appropriate apologies. Next, he would secure a lamb without spot or blemish and lead the lamb to the gate of the court.





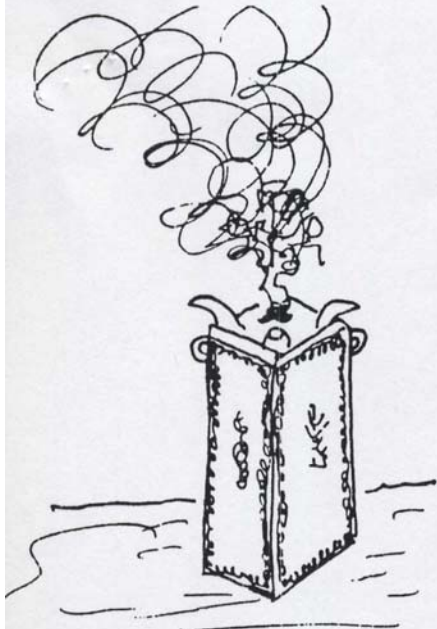
A priest of the temple would meet him there to discuss the nature of the problem. He would then take the man inside the court, North of the altar of sacrifice, where the sinner would drop to his knees, put his hands on the head of the lamb, and confess his sin. The sin would symbolically be transferred from the sinner to the lamb. The



lamb under the condemnation of the law, must die instead of the Israelite who had committed the act.

The priest would then give the sinner a knife and he would kill the lamb, thus accepting the fact that he alone killed the lamb through his sin. While the lamb was dying the priest would catch some of its blood in a vial. He would then place the dead lamb on the altar of sacrifice, where the lamb was burned up, leaving only ashes.(21)

The Israelite then left the court to return to his tent, sinless. His sin was left at the sanctuary through the death of the lamb. The priest, now symbolically having the sin in the form of blood, walks to the laver, where he washes his hands and feet and proceeds into the first compartment of the temple. In many instances "sins" were not immediately carried into the temple, but before the day was over all sins brought to the court by sinners and left there by a sacrifice were eventually placed in the temple by the priest.

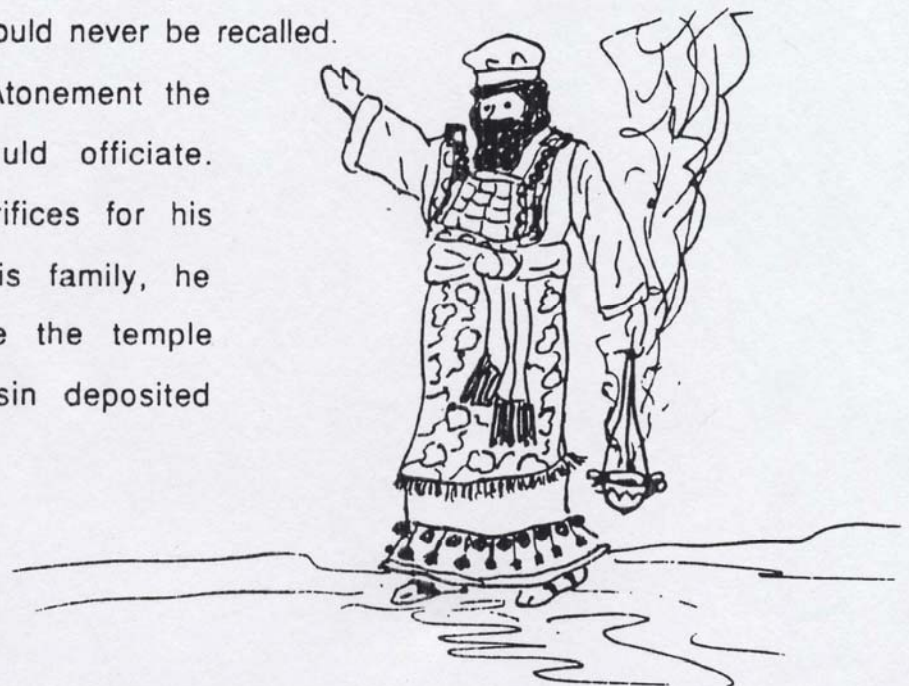


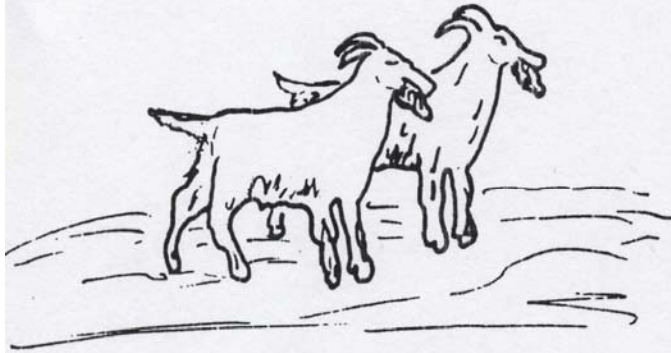
The priest, arriving in the holy compartment of the temple, proceeded to the altar of incense where he sprinkled the blood on its horns. Symbolically, through this service the sin is transferred to the temple and a record is made of that sin. But no one can see the sin because it is in the temple and covered by the blood. All day long and throughout the year this daily service took place. Sins were

transferred from the sinner to the sacrifice, then to the priest who carried the sin into the temple and left it there. These sins eventually would be blotted out on the day of atonement, cleansing the temple.

On the Day of Atonement or cleansing, all the sins that had been placed into the temple were removed--blotted out. As long as the record of sin remained in the holy place, the record could become public and expose the sinner again to its consequence, death. But on the Day of Atonement after the sins were blotted out and the record destroyed, sins and their record could never be recalled.

On the Day of Atonement the High Priest only could officiate. After appropriate sacrifices for his sins and those of his family, he proceeded to cleanse the temple from all records of sin deposited there during the year.



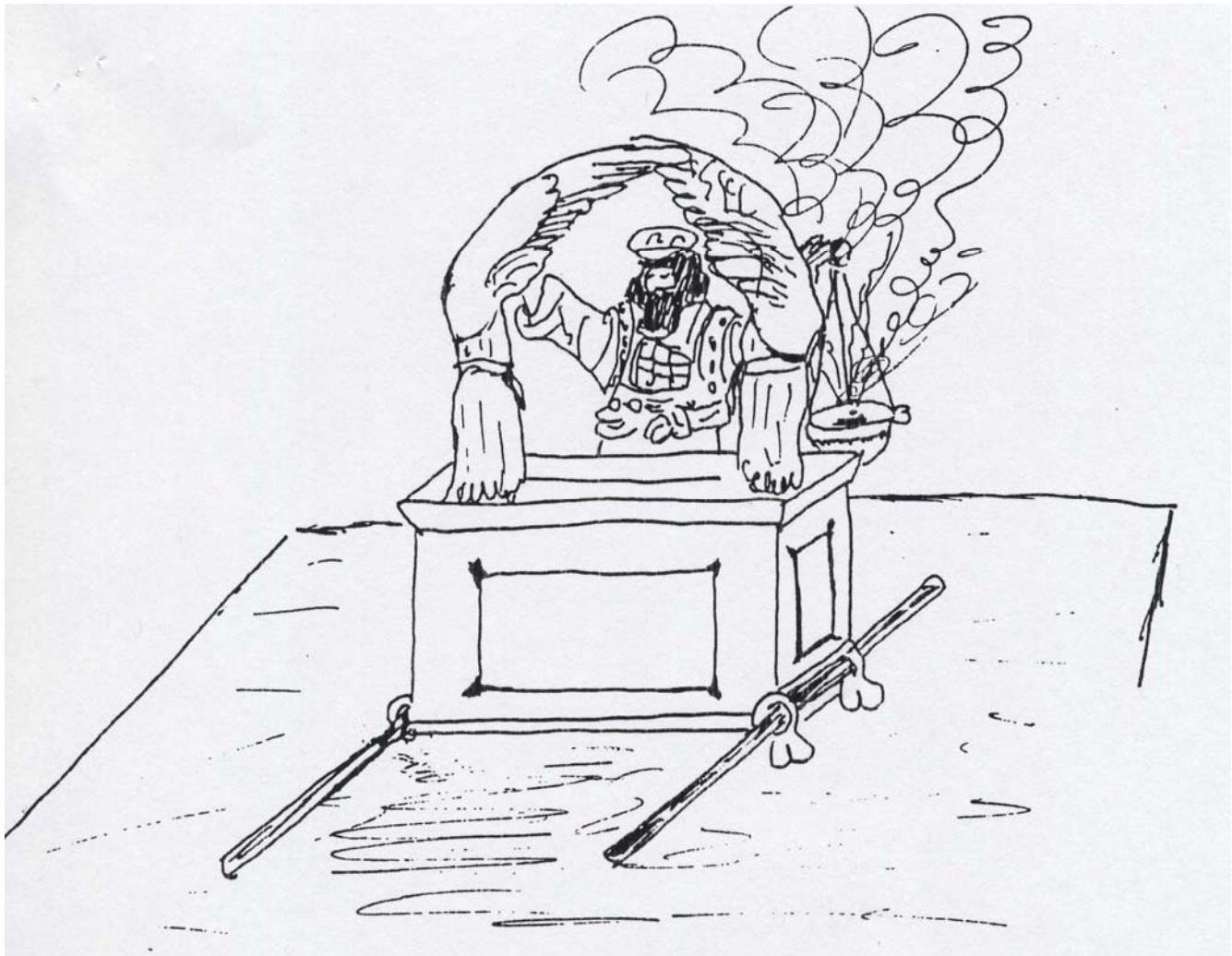


Two goats were brought to the door of the temple and lots drawn to determine which would become Azazel, the scapegoat. The Lord's goat was slain as the offering for the sacred service, while the scapegoat

was left alive for the purpose of carrying the sins removed from the temple into the wilderness. There the goat would die and the record of sin would die with him.

The High Priest, having killed the Lord's goat would catch some of the blood in a vessel. Washing himself at the brazen laver, he proceeded into the temple with the blood and a golden censer filled with hot coals and incense. He would not stop in the first compartment, the Holy, but would proceed into the Most Holy or second compartment of the sanctuary.

As he stood before the ark which contained the Ten Commandments, he would sprinkle blood on the mercy seat and before the ark seven times. Then he would turn and leave the Most Holy and proceed into the Holy, where he would pause for a moment and symbolically pick up all the sins that had been placed there while he officiated in the Most Holy place. He then carried them out to the waiting scapegoat, confessing all the sins he had brought with him from the temple, thus transferring sin from himself to the goat. The scapegoat would then be led from the camp of Israel into the wilderness by the hands of a just man. The goat would be turned loose to eventually perish along with the sins and their record.



The High Priest then returned to the sanctuary, changed his garments, returned to the court, and performed a ceremony with fire, thus cleansing the court of all defilements. With the temple and the court cleansed, the yearly round of services was complete and Israel began a new year of services the following day.(22)

For over 1,500 years the yearly round of ceremonial services were carried on by ancient Israel except during the time when the temple lay in ruins. What was God revealing in these sanctuary ceremonies and symbols? If it was so important to have ancient Israel follow explicitly all details just as God had given them, then there must be wonderful truths found there, truths He wanted preserved.