

“The Tabernacle, the Cross and Me.”
Exodus 40 & Hebrews 9
February 26, 2006
Dr. Jerry Nelson

What does God think of you? Does God like you?
I’m not asking if you think he loves you; I’m asking if he likes you.

I start my message today with some assumptions, some premises, that I think can be amply demonstrated but which I don’t have time to prove:

My 1st premise is that God exists and that he is personal not just an impersonal force.

My 2nd premise is that having a relationship with that personal God is essential to our well-being both now and forever.

The logic goes something like this: If there is a God and if the word “God” means anything like someone with a will and the power to enforce that will, it certainly seems to our advantage to know that God and his will and comply with it.

Man may be able to exist without God but he cannot “live” without God.

Of course he can breathe, eat and sleep for a season.

But life is more than that and longer than that.

Again, if there is a God, we need to know him and be in right relationship with him.

If you will grant for the sake of discussion that such a God exists, it then seems reasonable to ask:

What does that God think of you?

So back to my first question: Does he like you?

Many, if not most, of us, in this place, are professing Christians.

We believe Christ died for us and that we will be with him when we die.

But how does God feel about you now?

Do you ever suspect he is angry with you?

Maybe you've repeatedly "blown it" in the past and you suspect God has never quite gotten over it.

Oh, you say God has forgiven you but you think he still has every right to still be angry with you.

Or maybe you would say, "No, God is not angry with me but I suspect he's usually just a little irritated with me?"

"I'm not a terrible person and never was but I've never been able to quite get it all together spiritually and I keep falling short in so many ways – my devotional life is intermittent and lackluster, my giving is the same, I'm not an evangelist or a teacher; in fact I don't know what "gifts" I have, I find that I'm angry a lot, and I end up saying things I shouldn't.

"I know God loves me but I suspect he's not pleased with me; I feel like he's disappointed in me."

Maybe I haven't described exactly how you feel about your relationship with God but maybe I've at least made you think about it.

Consider this: Why would ANYONE want to be around someone who is angry with them or disappointed with them, or even is judgmentally waiting for them to get it right?

We don't like being around a person who is critical of us, who is judging us or is angry with us – even if that person is God.

To often in our minds, our failings, great and small, stand between God and us.

But based on the Bible, I believe God wants something very different in his relationship with us than what I've just described.

In our nearly yearlong study of the Old Testament book of Exodus, we have seen that:

- God delivered his chosen people from Egyptian slavery.
- He guided and provided for them on their way to a new land, a new home.
- He gave them his laws by which they could construct a new society and live in right relationship with him and each other.
- And then two weeks ago we saw that God gave them instructions about the construction of a tabernacle – an

intricately designed tent-structure - where God would take up residence in their very midst.

The transcendent holy God of the universe would come to them and live among them.

Exodus 40:16-17, 34 “Moses did everything just as the LORD commanded him. So the tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month in the second year... Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.”

God had saved them, he's provided for them, and he was with them. It was perfect, right?

Not quite. In fact, not even close to perfect.

These people had been saved, provided for and blessed with the presence of Almighty God **but they were still sinners** – they would still violate their relationship with God and each other.

God was under no delusion about this.

In fact in the very instructions about the tabernacle where God would dwell with his people, God made two things clear:

1. The people could get close to God but not too close;
2. The sins of the people had to be atoned for.

It isn't until the next book of the Bible, the book of Leviticus, that we see this unfolded.

There we are told about the sacredness of that innermost chamber of the Tabernacle – the Most Holy Place.

Within the 150' X 75' courtyard was the 15' X 45' tent of meeting.

And within the tent of meeting were two chambers – one was 15'X30' and was called the Holy Place; the other was 15'X15' and was called the Holy of Holies or Most Holy Place.

The people could not even enter the outer chamber - the Holy Place; only certain priests were allowed in.

They went in to keep a special candle lit and to offer incense on a special altar and only under very rigid rules.

They could **not** enter the **Most** Holy Place.

And as to that Most Holy Place - The Holy of Holies - only the high priest could enter and he could enter only once each year, as I will describe shortly.

God was with them, but the people couldn't get too close.

As to the sins of the people, in the courtyard was a large altar on which animal sacrifices were made.

And when people sinned they were to bring special animals and there in the courtyard they were to lay their hands on the heads of the animals indicting the transfer of their sin to the animals and then the priest would sacrifice the animals on the altar sprinkling the blood on the corners and base of the altar.

The animal would die in the place of the person.

This would be done morning and evening, day after day.

Then once each year, other very special sacrifices would be made for the sins of the people.

In Leviticus 16 we are told that on the 10th day of the 7th month was the Day of Atonement.

On that day only, after elaborate personal preparations and putting on clothing designed at God's instruction, the high priest was first of all to select a young bull and sacrifice it for his own sin.

He then took some of the blood of that animal and carefully entered the Most Holy Place where he put the blood on the top of the Ark of the Covenant, the place called "the mercy seat" or the "atonement cover" atoning for his own sins.

Then he went back out and took two goats.

One he sacrificed for the sins of the people.

And again he entered the Most Holy Place, this time to put the blood of the sacrificial goat on the same "mercy seat" or "atonement cover" atoning for the sins of the people.

Then he would go out to where the other goat was tied.

Leviticus 16:21-22 "He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of

the Israelites--all their sins--and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the desert in the care of a man appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place; and the man shall release it in the desert.”

In these ways the sins of the people were atoned for, covered over, forgiven, so that they could continue as the people of God and in relationship with one another.

But there were two problems:

While it was true that God was near, even in their midst, the people were still separated from God by the Holy Place and by the Priests.

The people could get close but not too close.

The holiness and justice of God were far more evident than the nearness and intimacy of God.

And the second problem was that everyone knew that sacrifices of animals for the sins of the people could only be symbolic and temporary at best.

Now with that background, I want you to stand with me as I read from Hebrews 9:1-14

“Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. ² A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. ³ Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, ⁴ which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. ⁵ Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.

^{HEB 9:6} When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room (The Holy Place) to carry on their ministry. ⁷ But only the high priest entered the inner room (The Most Holy Place), and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. ⁸ The Holy Spirit was showing by this that

the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle (The Holy Place) was still standing. ⁹ This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. ¹⁰ They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings--external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

^{HEB 9:11} When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. ¹² He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³ The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴ How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!”

May God bless the reading of his Word. PRAY

In Hebrews chapters 9 and 10 the author goes into some detail to show **the superiority** of Christ’s work **over** the sacrificial system of the Old Testament.

He does not discount the old system but he shows that it was intended to be symbolic, an illustration, a foreshadowing, of the real action that would eventually take place and did take place in Christ.

One chapter earlier in Hebrews 8:5 the Bible says that the OT priests, “serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: “See to it that you make everything **according to the pattern** shown you on the mountain.”

That OT Tabernacle was patterned after the ideal dwelling place of God in heaven.

Now I don’t need to imagine a physical tabernacle in heaven to understand this.

And so our text, in the book of Hebrews, contrasts the earthly tabernacle constructed by Moses with the “greater and more perfect tabernacle” of heaven.

Hebrews 9:11 “Christ...went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.”

Earlier he wrote of Jesus in Hebrews 1:3 and 8:1 “After (Jesus) had provided purification for sins, **he** sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven... We (have a) high priest...who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.

Later he would write on this same subject: Hebrews 9:24 “For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.”

Christ Jesus didn't enter only a tent-building in the desert which was symbolic of the real thing, he entered into the real thing and remains in that real and most intimate presence of the Father.

That is significant for us and so we will come back to that.

Not only does he contrast the place, the Tabernacle, he also contrasts the sacrifice.

Hebrews 9:12 “(Jesus) did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all **by his own blood**, having obtained eternal redemption.

Here is how the author says that in different words just a few verses later: Hebrews 9:25-28 “Nor did (Jesus) enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own...But now (Jesus) has appeared once for all (time)...to do away with sin by **the sacrifice of himself**. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people.”

Or as he says it earlier, if the blood of bulls and goats can cleanse the sinner at least outwardly, Hebrew 9:14 “How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered **himself**

unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!”

God the Son, who became man, perfect, unblemished by sin, perfectly fulfilling the law of God, offered himself as the sacrifice for all of God’s people.

Remember those sacrificial animals on whom the people who would lay their hands transferring their sin to the animals?

2 Corinthians 5:21 “God made (Jesus) who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Isaiah the prophet predicted this 800 years before Jesus:

Isaiah 53:4-5

“Surely he took up our infirmities
and carried our sorrows,
yet we considered him stricken by God,
smitten by him, and afflicted.

ISA 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

Jesus, the perfect high priest, offers the perfect sacrifice, himself, and goes into the perfect “holy of holies,” the very presence of the Father himself, in heaven, and makes atonement for our sins.

Now those are the facts; what I want you to see next are the intended results.

When an OT believer sinned, why did he offer a sacrifice?

Because he knew that without the shedding of blood there was no atonement, forgiveness, covering, for his sin.

And if there was no forgiveness it would mean a barrier remained between him and God.

The OT believer wanted the barrier removed; he wanted the relationship with God restored.

But here is the interesting thing about the OT believer’s experience:

Hebrews 9:9-10 The whole sacrificial system of the OT is “an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered **were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.**¹⁰ They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings--**external** regulations applying until the time of the new order” (that is, until Christ came).

Hebrews 10:1-4 That old system, “can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.

(That “make perfect” means they can never provide inward cleansing of the conscience, final and complete removal of guilt, full unencumbered access to God)

“If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have **felt guilty** for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”

Even though the OT believer offered the sacrifice, he or she was still left with a guilty conscience.

The days of atonement were actually an annual reminder that their sin was a barrier between them and God.

The annual sacrifices reminded them that they were still **without** an unbroken and unbreakable relationship with God.

There was still a distance between them and God that couldn't be overcome.

I think they understood that those sacrifices weren't finally and fully dealing with the sin that separated them from God?

They'd met the requirements, but it wasn't done.

In contrast to that, look at our experience now that Christ has died for us.

Hebrews 9:14 “How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, **cleanse our consciences** from acts that lead to death (from sin that separates us from God), so that we may serve the living God!

Speaking of the same conscience, he says:

Hebrews 10:19-22 “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the **Most** Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw **near to God** with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to **cleanse us from a guilty conscience.**”

Do you see it? We aren't kept at arm's length from God, we aren't kept out of the holy place or even the MOST holy place.

In Jesus, we can come confidently into the very presence of God.

Our consciences have been cleansed – something is supposed to have happened to our consciences.

Now I'm back to where I started this sermon: Does God like you?

I think that most of the time when we do something wrong toward another person, even if it is just not meeting their expectations, we assume that a barrier has come up between us.

Knowing that we have done something wrong we **expect** that the other person is now angry with us or at least irritated with us or at the very least disappointed in us.

Our consciences cause us to think that way.

So it is in our perceived relationship with God.

We sin and we assume that God is angry, peeved or disappointed in us.

We assume he draws away from us and so we draw away.

Furthermore we assume that we must make up for this sin in some way or God will remain distant.

Now if we were Catholics we would think to do penance.

But being good Protestants, we know we can't **do** anything, so we just feel miserable for a while until we think we have felt miserable long enough to convince God we were sincere in our "miserableness" and he will take pity on us and forgive us – I call that Protestant penance.

And of course the more offensive the sin, the longer we think we must feel guilty to be adequately repentant.

But even that doesn't end it, because when we remember our past sins, Satan tempts us, and depending on our personalities, we are inclined, to feel more or less guilty all over again leading us to more "Protestant penance."

What's the antidote to such guilty feelings about our relationship with God and others? The antidote is TRUTH!

God's feelings toward me are not dependent on me.

The Father's attitude toward me is dependent only on Jesus.

My trust is in Jesus and here's what the Bible says about my relationship with God:

- Christ's death paid the full penalty for my sins.
- Christ's death **forever** removed the barrier of sin and guilt between God and me.
- I am in Christ, I belong to him, I'm now part of him, or to use Biblical terminology, I'm part of his body, I'm part of his bride, I'm part of his family, I'm his child, I'm part of his people.

If you are trusting Jesus, I want you to see you are connected to him!

Then realizing that we are part of him, look what happened in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus!

Ephesians 2:4-7 "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive **with Christ** even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And **God raised us up with Christ and** (here's the

part I most want you to see) **and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.**”

We have been brought right into the **Most** Holy Place – the Holy of Holies – the very presence of the Father.

When Jesus was baptized the Father said, Matthew 3:17 “This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.”

When three disciples joined Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, they heard the Father say, Matthew 17:5 “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

What do you suppose the Father felt when the Son returned to heaven following his death, resurrection and ascension?

Do you think he felt pleasure, acceptance, and delight? Absolutely!

In this day of frequent travel most anywhere in the world, it would not as likely happen this way, but imagine a much-loved son leaving his home to serve the Lord in a distant place.

Years later, after marrying and having children of his own, he returns home, with his family, to visit his father.

- What do you think the father’s feelings are toward the son?
- Now to the point, what are the father’s feelings toward the son’s wife and children?

Even in this homely illustration you can see how readily the father accepts the children **because of the son.**

I love the old King James translation of Ephesians 1:6 “He has made us **accepted in the Beloved.**”

On the authority of God’s word I can say to you, if you are trusting in Jesus Christ as your saving-Lord, **God likes you!**

He finds you acceptable!

He’s not waiting around for us to change to be more acceptable to him.

He will change us but not so we will more acceptable to him but so we will better enjoy who he is and what he has for us.

He's not dissatisfied with you.

Your sins, your failings, don't make you less liked or loved.

Your conscience is clean.

Oh, you were guilty to be sure, but the guilt is removed and you may now live as if you had never sinned in the first place.

Well, you say, my problem is not that I think God won't forgive me but that I can't forgive myself.

Many would suggest that not forgiving oneself is a matter of low self-esteem.

I've often wondered if it is truly the opposite – we think too highly of ourselves.

When we say, "How could I have done that?!" one possibility is that we are really saying, "I'm not that kind of person, that action is totally out of character – it's not like me."

The truth of the matter is that we ARE sinners just like everybody else, and it was totally in character.

We need to get over ourselves and recognize that nothing we can do could ever make up for what we have done – there is only one remedy and that is grace based on Christ's death in our place.

Or maybe when we say, "How could I have done that?!" – we might be thinking, "I always do the wrong thing, truth is, I'm no good and never will be."

Underlying that statement is the pride that says, "I ought to be better on my own." "Surely there is something I can do to improve my condition."

But the truth of the matter is we are no good and we never will be on our own.

Again, we must get over ourselves and truly admit before God what we have been saying about

ourselves all along - that we are no good and never will be without help – we need grace.

We must quit trying to forgive ourselves and claim the forgiveness that is in Christ alone.

And when those feelings of guilt over past sins plague us, we have only one place to go with them.

We go to the MOST Holy Place, and in faith, we enter into the presence of the Holy Father in Jesus.

We claim our place: forgiven, not guilty, fully a child of God.

And we hear the Father say, “This is my much loved child, in him or her I am well-pleased.”

And that is the voice we listen to.

If you are trusting in Jesus, you can say with all the authority of God’s own word – “Yes, God likes me!”

But if today, you are not trusting in Jesus, I urge you to go to him, to seek his forgiveness and his grace.

There are people who would love to pray with you and help you.

They are in the Prayer Chapel now – go there as soon as we finish here.

Pray

Gloria Patri

Other notes:

“The really effective barrier to a man’s free access to God is an inward and not a material one; it exists in his conscience. It is only when the conscience is purified that a man is set free to approach God without reservation and offer him acceptable service and worship.” (Bruce, Hebrews, 196)

Aspects of the Cross:

Expiation – Christ’s death removes the sin.

Propitiation – Christ’s death was the way a righteous God in his love is able to turn away his wrath. He placates, appeases, or pacifies himself toward us through Christ’s death in our place.

Christ’s death is the place where the love of God and the justice of God meet and are satisfied.

God’s justice cannot allow a sinful human being into fellowship with a holy God and God’s love cannot allow sin to eternally separate us from him.

Reconciliation:

Not only is our sin a rebellion against a holy God but our sin also results in God’s anger against us. “The wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness...” Romans 1:20?

God intentionally and actively removes all ground for anger with us. He removes any reason for being upset with us.

He is reconciled to us in Christ.

“That we may serve the living God” – how can we serve him if we don’t trust him? How can he take delight in our love if he knows we don’t think he loves us unless we earn it?

In that case our love is not for him but for what we think our love will earn from him.

“That we may serve the living God.” Certainly the context suggests that since only the High Priest and then only annually could actually come into the presence of God in the Holy of Holies, we now have that access continually.

The Priest served God, now we may do so.

“Only when the heart has been purged from the defilement of a smiting conscience can it be renewed in fullness of faith and sincerity toward God.” (Lane, Hebrews, 286)

The Tabernacle (within which are two parts) 25:8; 26:1-37

The Holy of Holies

Ark 25:10-22 (Leviticus 16:32-34 Annual Day of Atonement)

Curtain 26:31-33 (separating Holy of Holies from the Holy Place)

The Holy Place

Table 25:23-30 (on the north side)

Lamp stand 25:31-40 (on the south side)

Altar of Incense 30:1-10 (in front of the curtain to the Holy of Holies)

The Courtyard (within which is the Tabernacle) 27:9-19

Basin for washing (between the Bronze Altar and the Tabernacle.

Bronze Altar 27:1-8 (daily sacrifices 29:38-43)

R. Laird Harris in NIV Bible Commentary:

Leviticus 4:1 “The LORD said to Moses, ² “Say to the Israelites: ‘When anyone sins unintentionally^g and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’S commands^h —

“The purpose of the sin offering was to give a specific way for a penitent sinner who was convicted of sin to attain full restoration of fellowship with God. It was both a confession of sin and an assurance of pardon. There were representative sin offerings prescribed for leaders of the people as well as offerings for the individual. A type of sin offering was available for the poorest sinner in the land (5:7, 11).

The difference between the sin offering and the guilt offering was in the nature of the sin. The former was for what might be called general sins; the latter was for sins that injured other people or detracted from the sacred worship. The guilt offering thus involved not only a sacrifice but also restitution plus a fine of 20 percent (6:5). The sins for which the sin offering was prescribed are called “unintentional sins”; the same expression is used in connection with the guilt offering (5:15). The sins concerned are not so strictly limited, however.

The expression “to sin unintentionally” (GK H8706) calls for some comment. The NIV reading may give the impression that there was no sacrifice for intentional sins. This presents a problem, for many of our sins are more or

less intentional (though not necessarily deliberate). The word basically means "to err," "go astray," "wander," or "stagger." That is, the notion of intent or lack of intent is not basic to the meaning of the Hebrew word and ought not to be imported.

The usual sins we fall into are covered by the sin offering and the guilt offering. For instance, lying, stealing, cheating, and false swearing are surely intentional; yet they are specifically covered by the guilt offering (6:2-3). There is one place where these words seem at first to refer to unintentional sins (Nu 15:22-31). There the "unintentional" sin is contrasted with sinning "defiantly" (NIV) or, as the Hebrew expresses it, "with a high hand." Here the NIV has correctly caught the sense of the unpardonable sin--not one done intentionally, but one done "defiantly," i.e., in rebellion, sinning against light (cf. Mt 12:31-32), which results in separation from God. No sacrifice is specified for that.

The sense will be adequately caught if, in all the verses concerned here in Lev 4-5, the phrase "sins unintentionally" is rendered by "goes astray in sin" or "does wrong" or the like. "Unintentional" seems better only in the manslaughter passages (Nu 35:11-22; Jos 20:3-5), and even there "inadvertently" or "by mistake" would actually fit better.

In the case of the sin offering, there was special emphasis on substitutionary atonement. For the sin of a prominent person--e.g., an anointed priest (4:3)--or the whole congregation (v.13), an expensive offering was demanded ("a young bull"). Substitution was typified by laying hands on the offering just prior to its being slain (cf. v.24). Some of the young bull's blood was to be taken into the Holy Place and sprinkled seven times before the veil and also put on the horns of the altar of incense. The rest of the blood was poured out at the base of the bronze altar, presumably on the ashes. In such cases the fat was to be burned on the bronze altar and the carcass burned outside the camp in the place of ashes (cf. Heb 13:11).

The Day of Atonement is not mentioned in Ex 23:14-17 and 34:18-23. Nor does it appear in Dt 16:1-16. These places mention only the three so-called pilgrimage festivals when the males of all Israel were to assemble before the tabernacle. The Day of Atonement was not such a pilgrimage festival. The ordinary Israelite remained at home, and the priests carried out the ritual. It was the only day of fasting enjoined on Israel and was to be a special Sabbath of rest and solemnity. It was a time of special contrition, special sin offerings, and atonement. It is kept to this day by the Jews and is called Yom Kippur ("Day of Atonement"). The biblical term is plural, "Day of Atonements."

This day had a special symbolism. Two goats were taken to bear the people's sins. One was killed as a sin offering; the other was sent off into the desert to bear away the sins of the people. The two goats thus symbolized both propitiation for sins by death and complete removal of the sins for which atonement was made. Clearly the Day of Atonement was to symbolize for Israel

every year the substitutionary atonement God provided for their sins and the total removal of their guilt.

Exodus NIV Application Commentary

The author, Roy Gane, sees three kinds of sins not just two. Numbers 15:30-31 suggests two: inadvertent sins which are expiable as in the Exodus text and deliberate sins which are not expiable. Gane following Schenker suggests there are two kinds of deliberate sin – deliberate but nondefiant which are expiable and “high handed” deliberate sins which are not. (See Gane in Lev/Num page 625ff) Israel at Kadesh Barnea and Achan in Joshua 7 were defiantly, highhandedly, deliberately rebellious.

But King Manasseh of 2 Chronicles was also and yet God forgave him (but probably not through the sacrificial system as with David’s sins with Bathsheba).

Zondervan New Bible Dictionary

CONSCIENCE The OT has no separate word for "conscience," but it neither lacks the idea nor the means to express it. It is clear from Genesis 3:8 that the first result of the Fall was a guilty conscience, compelling Adam and Eve to hide from God. David's "heart smote him" (1 Sam 24:5 KJV, MLB, RSV); NIV interprets this as "David was conscience-stricken." In everyday Greek the word *syneidesis* referred to the pain or guilt felt by persons who believed they had done wrong. Paul, who used the word more than other NT writers, refined and developed this meaning. (1) He described the universal existence of conscience (Rom 2:14-16) as the internal moral witness found in all human beings. (2) He believed that Christians should have clear and good consciences (2 Cor 1:12; 1 Tim 1:5, 19; 3:9). (3) Some Christians have a weak or partially formed conscience (1 Cor 8:1-13 and 10:23-11:1); in certain cases mature Christians are to restrict their liberty of action in order not to offend them. (4) Evil consciences are corrupted by false teaching (1 Tim 4:2; Titus 1:15). A person who rejects the gospel and resolutely opposes God has an evil conscience. (5) As a result of accepting the gospel, people receive a purified, or perfected, conscience (Heb 9:14; 10:22), through forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit. While Paul's use of the word **"conscience" is that of the internal witness of the mind and heart judging past actions in the light of Christian teaching**, he also appears to suggest that the conscience will guide present and future actions (e.g., Rom 13:3; 1 Cor 10:25).

The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible

The pivotal fact for the Christian as he considers **conscience** is the fact that behind **conscience** is God, who is holy, personal, and the Creator of a moral universe which is to be judged by His righteousness. Man is made in the image of God (**Gen 1:26**) and is answerable to Him for what he makes of himself, how he exercises his obligation to be a neighbor (**Luke 10:37**), and his dominion over

the created order. **Conscience** is “an intuition of the moral law” (ISBE), that is, the Bible takes the stance of *ethical realism*. “Man is not adrift in a complex world without an inner monitor. In the midst of the conflicting demands and many impulses of his nature, surrounded by a world of imperfect sensible objects, he feels the lure of perfections that cannot have their source in the imperfections of human existence. No amount of imagining and reasoning can derive the imperfect from the perfect. Only the dim awareness of perfection guides his analysis of and movement from imperfection” (Bertocci, 237). Paul appealed directly to manifestations of this intuition as the basis for his statement that all men are without excuse before God

The Christian’s **conscience** must be rooted in his redemption through God’s grace in Jesus Christ and not on works of the law (the flesh). Mankind, however, prefers a prescriptive moral system, one with specific, clearly spelled out rules. Man wants to know what to do and what not to do. As far as possible, he prefers to avoid or minimize moral decision. A conventional, external morality leaves him feeling more secure. Paul understood both the siren lure of a legalistic moral system and the moral shipwreck and spiritual death it brings. Therefore, he urged the Galatians to have the courage to live with a Christian’s **conscience**, one that is free in Jesus Christ and which cultivates the fruit of the Spirit

The person with a prohibitive **conscience** has a rigidly-fixed, negatively-oriented child’s **conscience**. The person’s consciousness is dominated by an unbearable burden of guilt, and by fear of reproof or punishment. Since he accepts responsibility for achieving the impossible, or for being what God never intended him to be, he lives in a chronic state of guilt-riddness. He feels obligated to get results for which he has neither the necessary knowledge nor the requisite talent. Fear of vice and wrong-doing is stronger than love of virtue and doing right. Goodness is reduced to not doing anything wrong. Life is dominated by a need to appease and to propitiate God and men. The person feels surrounded by demand, disapproval, and anger over his imperfections. He tends to experience “guilt feelings” rather than guilt. “Guilt feelings” result from repression of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that hold out the threat of disapproval and punishment. Repression enables the person to dissociate his experience of guilt from the thoughts or actions which induce the guilt. This leaves him with “free floating” guilt which he can now attach to more innocuous experiences. He finds these easier to deal with either because they are more readily avoided or because others keep reassuring him that he need not feel guilty about such matters. Guilt feelings dominate in a prohibitive **conscience**. Since they are free-floating they prevent real moral insight. And since they involve propitiatory self-punishment they prevent genuine contrition and repentance. Guilt feelings have little to do with sorrow for sin. They are signs of a preoccupation with a fear of consequences. If the person turns these feelings outward he is likely to adopt a critical disparaging life style, which dwells on the sins and shortcomings of others. If he turns them in on himself, he magnifies his sins, wallows self-punitively in them and dominates others through his self-reproach and threats of

self-destruction. In either case the person lives in a vicious circle virtually anesthetized against the counsel and spiritual ministrations of family, friends, and pastor. Not until he can be helped to reconnect the guilt feelings to the thoughts or actions that give rise to them is he likely to develop the contrition and repentance that open the way to genuine moral and spiritual insight and growth. Acquiring courage to face oneself and to accept forgiveness involves for such a person turning his world topsy-turvy. His implicit major premise is that love is always conditional and is, at its root, a reward for perfection. From this he concludes that forgiveness is at best partial and temporary and is contingent on "not doing that again." Courage to trust that God's love is unconditional, rooted in His holy love and in the finished work of Jesus Christ freely extended to the penitent, and that forgiveness is real and abiding, i.e. courage to make a radical shift of one's view of the universe at the very point where one is most skeptical, frightened, and vulnerable rises partly out of desperation, but in greater degree from experiencing a measure of *agape* from persons and from the community of believers. Those who suffer from a prohibitive **conscience** require the major portion of a minister's pastoral ministrations. They also tend to be deeply involved in congregational misunderstandings and disputes.