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<http://fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

JEWISH APOLOGETICS (56)
ANSWERING JEWISH OBJECTION #47
(DDR #675)

Objection #47: It's clear that you misunderstand the entire sacrificial system. Sacrifices were for unintentional sins only. Repentance was the only remedy for intentional sins.

Brown's short response to this objection:

We all know that there were different functions for the sacrifices, including ritual purification, thanksgiving, personal consecration, and making of vows, along with atonement for unintentional sins. But the sacrifices on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) provided atonement for both intentional and unintentional sins, something taught emphatically in the Talmud and Law Codes. Scripture is clear on this, and Jewish tradition never questioned it. There was also one particular sacrifice (namely, the *'asham*, the guilt offering or reparation offering) that in conjunction with repentance served as atonement for intentional sins (called "transgressions" in the Bible). We should point out too that according to some Rabbinic traditions, repentance could "convert" intentional sins to unintentional sins, hence paving the way for atonement through sacrifice.¹

The fact of the matter is that the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) does provide for intentional sins.

Consider Leviticus 16:20-22,

Leviticus 16:20 "When he finishes atoning for the holy place, and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall offer the live goat.²¹ "Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it **all the iniquities of the sons of Israel, and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins;** and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send *it* away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who *stands* in readiness.²² "And the goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.

As Brown points out, "all" means "all." Further, note what is mentioned: iniquities, transgressions, and sins. Clearly, this includes intentional sins. Baruch, a *Jewish* authority on

¹Michael L. Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: General and Historical Objections—Volume 2*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), 123-126. In his book, Brown lists the objection and then gives a short response that is followed by a more developed response. This DDR series, for the most part, tracks the objection and his *short* response, after which you will find my comments. I highly recommend his book if you are interested in his longer responses (there is far too much material to include in the DDRs).

atonement and sacrifice noted that the offenses outlined in Leviticus 5:20-26, or 6:1-7 were quite definitely intentional—“a person misappropriated property or funds entrusted to his safekeeping, or defrauded another, or failed to restore lost property he had located . . .” The idea that these sins were unintentional in the sense of “accidents” is ludicrous.

The idea that sacrifices could not atone for *intentional* sins comes from a misunderstanding of Numbers 15:22-31, which speaks of unintentional and defiant sins. The context is set within the numerous regulations of the Mosaic Law. The unintentional sins were sins of omission—things they should have done but for some reason were not aware of. The defiant sins referred to sins of commission with a *continuing* attitude of defiance against God.

There are several different categories of sins: mental attitude sins (e.g., bitterness, jealousy, pride), sins of the tongue (lying, slander), and overt sins (stealing). In addition to these three categories or kinds of sins, there are also two categories of sins with respect to the plan of God: sins of omission and sins of commission. Sins of omission refers to *failure* to do something that God *commands*, whereas sins of commission refers to things that God *prohibits*. Sins of omission would include things like failure of children to honor parents, failure of believers to maintain an attitude of divine love, failure to pray to or trust God, and to failure to be part of a local church (Heb. 10:25). Sins of commission refer to direct acts of sin. Due to the emphasis in the doctrinal movement on confession of sin, let us not forget that our whole lives are to be *for* the Lord—in the positive mandates. There is so much more than simply confessing our sins, we need to live in all of those blessed positive mandates. In relation to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, sins of commission grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30-32) whereas sins of omission quench the Holy Spirit. It is one thing to keep short accounts of our sins to enable us to

get back in fellowship, it is quite another to live in His mandates and enjoy consistent fellowship with the Father and Jesus Christ,

John 14:21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him."

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him."

In Him,

Pastor Don