

‘WORSHIP GOD WANTS’
(Portraits of Christ in the Tabernacle)
Studies in Exodus & Leviticus

‘The Confessional’

Inside Roman Catholic churches there is a place to go when you have sinned and desire forgiveness – *the confession booth* or *confessional*. Off to the side in their churches is a two-compartment, closet-like room with two doors or curtains as entry into a simple private room with a seat, place to kneel, and a lattice-like screened window between the rooms. On one side is a repentant Catholic and in the other compartment is an ordained Roman Catholic priest who listens the person’s sins on the behalf of Christ, forgives the person, and prescribes some sort of chastisement (a number of *Our Father* prayers or a number of *Hail Mary’s* and doing something to mitigate any future judgment in purgatory/ pay money, do some good works, etc.) and finally *absolves* (expunges the sin confessed). This essential sacrament of the RCC is called *confession*, *penance*, or *reconciliation* and is required to be done at least once a year.

This sacrament began in the 15th century AD and has been criticized as not only to help people deal with and move beyond their failures, but also a serious problem in that it is often a place where criminals and perverted people reveal their sins to the priest who promises to keep confidential whatever was shared, regardless of the heinousness and illegality of what the priest heard. It is even recorded that some organized crime assassins preemptively confessed to murders they hadn’t even done yet, so they would be forgiven even before they actually carried out *the hit!* The priests’ vows of secrecy and confidentiality prevented authorities from knowing about, stopping, and prosecuting the cases. It is suspected that since priests confess to other priests, hiding each other’s sins must be a very common practice, especially in the *pedophile priest* epidemic in the RCC.

The RCC believes that sin was washed away at baby baptism and that sins committed later are to be absolved by a RCC priest in the official church *confessional*. This totally extra-biblical tradition is also an important part of most Orthodox, Anglican, and some Lutheran churches.

Scripture never suggests that God *farms out* confession, absolution, and reconciliation to any clergy person in this unbiblical religious alternative to biblical restoration, invented by Roman Catholicism. Even a new Christian can tell that the above *system* doesn’t involve the Lord Jesus Christ (priests are His vicar or presence instead) or the Bible (*repetitious rosary prayers, the priest’s advice about good works to atone for sin, financial gifts to the church, pilgrimages to grottos, etc.*).

The offering system of the Old Testament shows that God required the individual to come personally to Him for forgiveness and sacrifice, without the priest *standing in for God* but simply officiating, NOT mediating. In the New Testament, it is clear that the religious confessional system of Roman Catholicism is an interference to true confession of sin to Christ alone (**1 Timothy 2:5, etc.**) and a total interruption to genuine absolution and reconciliation (**Hebrews 10:10-14**). Scripture is clear: **“If we confess our sins, HE** (not a priest sitting in for Him) **is faithful and just to forgive us our sins** (*biblical absolution of sins mentioned*) **and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness** (*no penance, monetary pay-off, vain repetition prayers, etc.*) (**1 John 1:9**).

Only when our sin has offended, stumbled, or injured another person are we required to involve someone else (**Matthew 5:23-26, James 5:16**). Other than that, the Lord Jesus Christ is in the designated confessional booth of the Holiest of Holies in heaven 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, year in and year out to hear, forgive, absolve, and reconcile any truly repentant child of God. The RCC may help religious non-Christians think they are doing something by going to the priest instead of directly to the Savior, but in reality, the *confessional* is of no value in dealing with sin – in fact, it only makes matters worse for those who frequent the *confession booth* instead of the **‘throne of grace’** where sin is dealt with completely by the Lord Jesus, the great High Priest of our faith (**Hebrews 4:14-16, 7:25-27, 10:19-25**). **PtL**

Access to the Tabernacle & God

(The 5 Mandatory Offerings – Pictures of Cleansing Through Christ)

The Five Mandatory Offerings

(Made on the brazen altar – a preview of the cross)

(always burning = God's wrath & forgiveness always offered)

5 cubits square x 3 cubits high = 5 sacrifices for the Triune God

Entering God's Holy Presence (reverence)

- #1 Whole burnt offering (bull, ox)/ Christ's vicarious death on the cross
(Our Savior's atonement (cleansing from sin & connecting with God))**
- #2 Grain or meal offering (unleavened)/ God's provisions for all who obey #1
(Our Lord's provision including a portion to give back to Him)**
- #3 Peace offering (lamb, goat, doves)/ with God, others & self, due to #1 & #2
(Our Lord & Savior's inner serenity for worship and reconciling w/others)**

- Now that we no longer have to offer the above 3 things because they are fully realized in Christ's sacrifice on the cross, how can their meaning help us as we approach God in devotions & worship?

Embracing God's Mercy & Forgiveness (restoration)

- #4 Sin offering (bullock)/ unintentional uncleanness, defilement & neglect
(Sins and failures we blunder into due to our flesh and human sin nature)**
- #5 Trespass offering (ram)/ willful, intentional, iniquity & wickedness
(Premeditated, purposeful, self-indulgent rebellion against God & His Word)**

Now in New Testament times, the cross serves as our altar. Christ's once for all forever death on the cross and resurrection have paid for our spiritual and moral failures. Even so, knowledge of these categories of sin can help us see the seriousness of sins that interfere with our relationship to God and others.

- How can thinking of these offerings help us take confession of sins more seriously?

New Testament Christians / Jesus the Lamb of God

"If we confess (agree, plead guilty, feel as He does about it) our sins, (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins (the one we know and are confessing) and cleanses us from all unrighteousness (the wrong things or omissions we've done unintentionally, or don't remember)" *(1 John 1:9)*

- Discuss how to confess sin to God in a way that doesn't become just routine recitation of **1 John 1:9**.
- *Confess* means to *agree with* or feel the same way – how does God feel about sin?
- How can Christians avoid just *rattling off 1 John 1:9*, but not feeling very grieved about what we did?

Extra Special Free-will Offerings

(Voluntary offerings to accompany the regular offerings)

The Drink Offering: *(oil & wine) dedication of feasts, sabbaths (2 Timothy 4:6)*

The Wave Offering: *(lift up to heaven) dedicate priests, holy days (Acts 2:1-5)*

The Heave Offering: *(lift up, down & around) dedicate to service & ministry (Mark 10:16)*

These kinds of offerings, when done voluntarily, accompanied the other sacrifices as something extra special for the Lord. These also were dedication of those going into ministry, babies, etc. In our day you may dedicate babies, homes, cars, businesses and our lives (*Romans 12:1*).

- Why are 'free-will' offerings like these such a blessing to God and the one making the offering?