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A STUDY OF THE WHOLE BIBLE

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

OFFERING THE SACRIFICES (1:1–6:30)

The Place of the Passage

Leviticus begins with sacrifice instructions. There were five kinds of sacrifices used in Old Testament worship: burnt offerings (1:1–17), grain offerings (2:1–16), peace offerings (3:1–17), sin offerings (4:1–5:13), and guilt offerings (5:14–6:7). These offerings were all part of a process called “making atonement”. The process of atonement is too rich for just one kind of sacrifice to represent it, so Leviticus appoints five sacrifice rituals to express different aspects of the singular work of atonement:

Burnt Offerings (Leviticus 1:1–17)

For this offering, the entire sacrifice was burned as a “food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord” (vv. 9, 13, 17). God does not literally consume food (Psalm 50:13), but this sacrifice uses a common human experience to portray God’s pleasure. The burnt offering instructions are repeated three times, for those who bring cattle (Leviticus 1:3–9), sheep or goats (vv. 10–13), and birds (vv. 14–17).

Grain Offerings (Leviticus 2:1–16)

This is the only offering that does not involve blood, hence its traditional title “grain offering.” Its Hebrew title, however, is *minhah*, which means “tribute.” The burnt offering was wholly burned on the altar. The grain offering was partially burned and partially eaten by priests. The peace offering is the only sacrifice from which the offerer himself ate a portion. This was done in the presence of God, who also received a portion on the altar.

Peace Offerings (3:1–17)

A peace offering is a voluntary sacrifice given to God in three specific instances: First, a peace offering could be given as a freewill offering, meaning that the worshiper was giving the peace offering as a way to say thank you for God’s generosity; the second way a peace offering could be given was alongside a fulfilled vow; the third purpose of a peace offering was to give thanksgiving for God’s deliverance in an hour of dire need. None of these three reasons to sacrifice had anything to do with propitiation, with appeasing God, or with pacifying Him.

Sin Offerings (Leviticus 4:1–5:13)

The purpose of these are cleansing. Sin pollutes and corrupts the world and the tabernacle. God cannot live with the moral and spiritual filth that is sin. The sin offering cleansed away the filth of sin. It treats sacrificial blood like a detergent that washes the “stains” of human sin from God’s presence. It is the offensiveness of sin against God—and its removal—that this offering teaches. Old Testament law distinguished “unintentional” sins from “high-handed” (or

deliberate) sins. The sin offering removed the offense of unintentional sins (4:2, 13, 22, 27). High-handed sins could also be cleansed, but only by the intercession of the high priest on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:16, 21).

Guilt Offerings (Leviticus 5:14–6:7)

The purpose of these are repayment. Sin always incurs a debt against God and often incurs a debt against our fellow human beings. These offerings are concerned with restoring or repaying our sinful debts to God and humanity. This class of offering was to repair the economic damage that sins often cause. Sin can bring loss to God's house (5:14–19) or to a neighbor (6:1–7). In Old Testament law, a person who concealed theft and was caught had to pay double or even five-fold restitution (Exodus 22:1, 4). But in this text, we learn that one who confessed his sin voluntarily, restored the loss, and brought a guilt offering paid only an added fifth in penalty (Leviticus 6:5). Notably, one fifth (or 20 percent) was a typical interest rate on loans in the ancient world.

The Big Picture

The people of Israel are able to enter God's presence because of the thorough system of atonement he put in place.

Gospel Glimpses

ACCEPTED. The opening verses of Leviticus introduce its gospel orientation: "When any one of you brings an offering to the Lord . . . he shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the Lord" (Leviticus 1:2–3). What a marvelous privilege it is to be invited to draw near to God and to approach him with the promise of acceptance.

LAMB OF GOD. Early in Israel's history, God taught Abraham about the sacrifice that would ultimately atone for sin. God took Abraham to the mountain where the temple would later be built (Genesis 22:2; II Chronicles 3:1). There he was told to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac, the heir of the promised kingdom. However, before Abraham could carry through with that daunting command, God gave a ram as a substitute for Isaac. By that exchange, God taught that every animal offered at his sanctuary foreshadowed an heir greater than Isaac who would one day become the true sacrifice. Thus the author of Genesis closes that story with the statement, "So . . . it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided'" (Genesis 22:14). When the book of Genesis was composed, the people of God were still looking forward to the promised heir who would fulfill the sacrifice represented by all the animal offerings on the sanctuary altar. The Psalms and the Prophets also express this hope in the Coming One's sacrifice: see especially Psalm 16:8–11; Psalm 22:1–31; Psalm 40:6–8; and Isaiah 53:1–12. Although some in ancient Israel trusted the animal sacrifices themselves as the literal payment for their forgiveness (Psalm 50:7–15; Isaiah 1:11), the true purpose of the sacrifices was always to point ahead to the sacrifice of Christ.

Whole Bible Connections

COMMUNION. The peace offering involved five steps: presentation of a spotless offering (Leviticus 3:1, 6); laying hands on the sacrifice (3:2, 7–8, 13); slaughter (3:2, 8, 13); offering a portion to God (3:3–5, 9–11, 14–16); and eating a portion in God's house (7:11–36). In the New Testament, Jesus sat with his disciples at a peace offering meal (Luke 22:7–23) and revealed that he is the true sacrifice who provides for our communion at the Lord's Table. Therefore, Jesus instructed his disciples to eat a simplified peace offering meal "in remembrance of me." Now, instead of bringing an animal sacrifice, Christians approach the communion table by remembering Christ with repentance in his name (I Corinthians 11:17–34).

Theological Soundings

SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT. Each time an animal sacrifice was brought to the altar, the offerer would "lay his hand on [its] head . . . and it [was] accepted for him" (Leviticus 1:4; also, 3:2, 8, 13; 4:4, 15, 24, 29, 33). The ritual act of pressing one's hand on the head of the offering was an act of transfer, identifying the animal as a substitute to take the presenter's place in the ritual to follow. This action was often accompanied with a verbal confession of sins over the animal (16:21). These Old Testament ritual acts provide the backdrop for the reality that the sinless Christ became a substitute for sinners.

Please answer the following questions:
Leviticus Chapter 1

1. Where did the Lord speak to Moses? (v. 1)
2. From where are animals for the offering to be brought? (v. 2)
3. List the three types of sacrifices that were used for burnt offerings, and the qualifications of each. (vv. 3,10-14)
4. Where was the burnt offering offered? (vv. 3-11)
5. What was the purpose of the burnt offering? (v. 4)
6. What were the responsibilities of the one making the offering? (vv. 4-11, 13-17)
7. What was done with the blood? (vv. 5, 11-15)
8. What were the duties or responsibilities of the priest? (vv. 5-11, 13-17)
9. How was the burnt offering to be prepared? (v. 6)
10. Who was in charge of preparing the offering on the altar? (v. 7-8)

11. What is said to be pleasing to the Lord? (v. 9)
12. What type of animal from the flock did the Lord require for an offering? (v. 10)
13. Where was an offering from the flock supposed to be slaughtered? (v. 11)
14. Who arranged the cut pieces of the sacrifice? (v. 12)
15. What part of the sacrifice was supposed to be washed? (v. 13)
16. What types of birds were to be made for a burnt offering? (v. 14)
17. How was a bird supposed to be prepared for sacrifice? (vv. 15-17)

Leviticus Chapter 2

1. Who is the instruction for a grain offering directed to? (v. 1)
2. What three things should a grain offering contain? (v. 1)

3. The worshipper brings the offering to Aaron's sons the priests. What are the priests to do with the handful of fine flour, oil, and frankincense? (v. 2)
4. What will the offering be unto the Lord? (vs. 2)
5. Who does the remainder of the grain offering belong to? (v. 3)
6. If the worshipper brought a grain offering baked in an oven, what was not to be in the bread? (v. 4)
7. If the worshipper brought wafers spread with oil, what was not to be in the wafers? (v. 4)
8. If the grain offering was made on the griddle, it would be of fine flour, unleavened, and mixed with oil. What was the worshipper to do to the griddle cake before offering it? (v. 6)
9. If the grain offering was made in a pan - it would also be flour and oil - brought to the priest who would offer it up on the altar as a memorial portion to the Lord, an offer by fire as a sweet smelling aroma. What was to be done with the remainder of the grain offering? (v. 10)
10. What two things were not to be a part of the offering by fire to the Lord? (v. 11)

11. Firstfruits were also brought to the Lord as a means of thanksgiving, but they would not be given on the altar for a soothing aroma. In regard to every grain offering, however it was presented, what was the requirement that it must have and why? (v. 13)

12. What were the instructions about early ripened things brought to the Lord for an offering? (v. 14)

13. What would the worshipper put with the offering? (v. 15)

14. When the priests offered it up in smoke, what would it be for our Lord? (v. 16)

Leviticus Chapter 3

1. What could the worshipper offer as a peace offering from their herd? (v. 1)

2. What condition was the animal to be in? (v. 1)

3. What two things did the worshipper participate in ? (v. 2)

4. What did Aaron's sons the priests do with the blood from the sacrificial animal? (v. 2)

5. What was the sacrifice that went up to the Lord from the peace offerings? (vv. 3-4)

6. What does verse 16 of this chapter make clear in regard to this? (v. 16)

7. Where would this part of the peace offering be placed on top of when it ascended up in smoke to the Lord? (v. 5)

8. What were the two things that they were never to eat as a perpetual statute throughout all their generations? (v. 17)

9. What two things were they forbidden to eat? (v. 17)

Leviticus Chapter 4

1. What kind of sin does the sin offering take care of? (vv. 1,2)

2. Who is the first person that the Lord gives instruction for concerning the sin offering? (v. 3)

3. When the priest sinned, who also became guilty with him? (v. 3)

4. What was the priest who sinned to bring for his sin offering? (v. 3)

5. What 2 things was he to do at the doorway of the tent of meeting? (v. 4)

6. From past studies on the sacrificial animals, what did it represent for him to lay his hands upon the animal? (v. 4)

7. The priest was to bring some of the blood to the tent of meeting. What did he do with blood there in front of the veil of the sanctuary? (vv. 5,6)

8. Where else was the priest to put some of the blood of his own sin offering? (v. 7)

9. What was he to do with the remaining blood? (v. 7)

10. What was to be removed from the animal and what was he to do with it? (vv. 8-10)

11. What was to be done with the hide of the bull and all of its flesh, etc.? (v. 12)

12. God gives instruction if the whole congregation commits an error and then the matter becomes "known" to them. (v.13)

13. What was to be offered for their error as a community? (v. 14)

14. Where were they to bring the animal? (v. 14)

15. Who were the ones to represent the entire congregation and what two things were they to do there? (v. 15)

16. The anointed priest was to take some of the blood to the tent of meeting. What did the priest do in front of the veil when this sin offering was made? (v. 17)

17. He was to put some of the blood on the horns of the altar before the Lord in the tent of meeting which would be the altar of incense. What did he do with the rest of the blood? (v. 18)

18. He removed all the fat and offered it up as smoke on the altar. Once the priest made atonement for the sin of the congregation, what was true in regard to their spiritual condition? (v. 20)

19. Where was the bull burned for the sin offering for the assembly? (v. 21)

20. When a leader was made aware of a sin he had committed unintentionally, what animal was he to bring for his sin offering and in what condition? (v. 22,23)

21. The leader was to lay his hand on the head of the goat and slay it by the bronze altar where they slayed the burnt offering.(v. 24) This was a different altar than the anointed priest and the elders for the congregation. They put the blood on the horns of the incense altar whereas the priest will put the blood of the goat on the horns of the brazen altar. (v. 25). What did he do with the rest of the blood? (v. 25)

22. All of the fat was offered up in smoke on the altar just like was done in the sacrifice of peace offerings (v. 26). Once the priest made atonement for the leader, what was his spiritual condition? (v. 26)

23. The last group given is the common people. If an unintentional sin became 'known' to them, they were to bring an offering for their sin to the priest. (v. 27) What type of animal were they to bring and what condition were they to be in? (v. 28)

24. The person was to lay his hand on the offering before he slayed it. Where would he slay it at? (v. 29)

25. Where did the priest apply the blood of this offering? (v. 30)

26. What did he do with the rest of the blood of the offering? (v. 30)

27. The priest removed the fat like was done in the peace offerings and offered it up in smoke on the altar for a soothing aroma to the Lord. After the priest made atonement for him, what was his spiritual condition? (v. 31)

28. If he brought a lamb rather than a goat, it was still to be a female without defect. (v.32). He would lay his hand on the head and slay it in the same place.(v. 33) The priest would do the same thing with the blood, putting it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and he would pour the rest of the blood out at the base of the altar. (v. 34) He would remove the fat of the lamb and the priest would offer it up as fire to the Lord. When the priest made atonement for his sin, what was his spiritual condition? (v. 35)

Leviticus Chapter 5

1. What was the first thing a person was to do as soon as they were made aware of their sin in any of these areas and realized they were "guilty"? (v. 5)

2. What was the next step in receiving atonement and forgiveness for these sins? What animals were accepted and what was the sex of the animal to be? (v. 6)

3. If the person could not afford a lamb, what was he to bring to the Lord and what would they be offered for? (v. 7)

4. What would the priest do to the first bird for the sin offering? (v. 8)

5. What would he do with the blood of the sin offering? (v. 9)

6. What would the second bird be offered up as? (v. 10)

7. Once the priest made atonement in this way, what would the spiritual condition of the person who had sinned be? (v. 10)

8. If the person could not afford the two turtledoves or two young pigeons for a sin offering, what was allowed for him to bring with his confession of guilt? (v. 11)

9. What was he not to put on the flour and why not? (v. 11)

10. What would the priest do with the handful of fine flour for the sin offering? (v. 12)

11. Once the priest had made atonement for him, his sin would be forgiven him. What happened with the rest of the flour that had been brought? (v. 13)

12. The Lord continued to give Moses instructions about the offering; now the Guilt Offering. If a person was unfaithful and sinned "unintentionally" against the Lord's holy things, what animal was he to bring to the priest for a guilt offering? (v. 15)

13. He was also to bring restitution according to the valuation in silver by shekels in terms of the shekel of the sanctuary.(vs.15). He was to make restitution for what he had taken, but what else was required of him financially? (v. 16)

14. What was the outcome for the person spiritually once the priest made atonement for them? (v. 16)

15. If a person did any of things the Lord had commanded not to be done, he was guilty even if he was unaware. He would bring the ram for the guilt offering, and make restitution as need be.(vv.17,18). What does God say about man's guilt in breaking His commandments? (v. 19)

Leviticus Chapter 6

1. What is the person's spiritual condition after the priest makes atonement for them? (v. 7)

2. How, long was the burnt offering to stay on the altar? (v. 9)

3. What was to continue? (vv. 9-13)

4. What was the priest to wear to remove the ashes of the burnt offering? (v. 10)

5. What was he to do after placing the ashes by the side of the altar? (v. 11)

6. Where was he to take the ashes? (v. 11)

7. What was the priest to add to the fire each morning? (v. 12)

8. What was burned with the burnt offering? (v. 12)