

Leviticus 1-7

The Offerings

Background

The book of Exodus concludes with Moses erecting the Tabernacle. He is instructed to raise it up, install its utensils and anoint the priests for service.

Exodus 40:17

*And it came to pass **in the first month of the second year**, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was raised up.*

Once completed, the glory of God ascended upon the tabernacle

Exodus 40:34

*Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the **glory of the Lord** filled the tabernacle.*

This same demonstration of the presence of God would be used to guide Israel as they journeyed through the wilderness. When the cloud moved they moved when the cloud stayed they stayed.

Intro

The book of Leviticus opens right where Exodus leaves off. Israel is camped at the foot of Sinai waiting on the moving of the cloud. While they wait, they receive detailed instruction regarding worship.

Since salvation has always been based upon substitutionary sacrifice, the first step is to learn about the offerings. Moses is given instruction regarding 5 Offerings; The burnt, grain, peace, sin and trespass offerings and the use of 5 animals; bull, sheep, goats turtle-dove and pigeon

The book of Leviticus gets its name from the tribe of Levi who were chosen to serve as the priesthood for the nation. The sons of Aaron were selected as priests while the remaining descendants of Levi

served as their assistants. Their role was much like the role of the New Testament deacon who supports the pastor so the ministry of the word can continue to go forth

refardi the timespan of the book

- Genesis covers 2500 years
- Exodus covers over 80 years
- Leviticus covers a single month. It primarily consists of instruction given to Moses regarding how Israel was to worship and maintain fellowship with God.

As we go through this we will notice at least Four Basic Principles regarding Worship

- Worshipper never came empty-handed.
 - What did you bring tonight?
- Offering means “brought near” -
 - Worshipping means to draw close to Jesus
- Offered what was costly -
 - The poor substituted birds for lambs
- Worshipper was actively involved in the process -
 - Worship is not a spectator sport.

Some of the key words found in Leviticus include

- Holy - 78
- Clean - 40
- Offering - 192 times
- Sacrifice - 32 times
- Blood - 68
- Sin - 65

- Atonement -47
- Forgiven - 10
- Priest - 142

Chapter 1 - The Burnt Offering.

Leviticus 1:1

Now the Lord called to Moses, and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting, saying,

The mountain is no longer the meeting place. God will meet with the people at the tabernacle through the sacrifices. This changed once again after the destruction of the Temple when God Himself promised to be a little sanctuary for Ezekiel who lived in captivity. It changed again with the advent of the New Covenant where we meet with God at the Throne of Grace. The only access to that throne is through the cross. All who have put trust in Christ have direct access to the throne of God

Leviticus 1:3-4

*“If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own **free will** at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord. Then he shall **put his hand on the head of the burnt offering**, and it will be accepted on his behalf **to make atonement** for him.*

Instructions regarding the burnt offering include

- 1:3- It was to be a free will offering
- 1:4- The offerer would lay hands on the animal and kill it
- 1:5- The priest was required to sprinkle, the blood
- 9- The whole animal was burned on the altar
- 9- The offering was considered as a sweet aroma to God

Leviticus 6:8-13 gives further rules governing this offering. We are given the attire of the priest when offering and told that the fire is to be continual and the ashes from the sacrifice were taken outside the camp

The burnt offering symbolized total commitment to the Lord.

It was a free will offering that demonstrated the realization that we are sinners in need of a sacrifice and that we are devoting our whole self to the Lord. Provision was given to make the offering available regardless of one's financial status. But was designed to be costly. (Bull, goat, sheep, turtle dove or pigeon)

A person could give a burnt offering at any time. It was a sacrifice acknowledging the sin nature and a request for renewed relationship with God.

God also set times for the priests to give a burnt offering for the benefit of Israel as a whole,

- Every morning and evening (Exodus 29:38-42; Numbers 28:2)
- Each Sabbath (Numbers 28:9-10)
- The beginning of each month (Numbers 28:11)
- At Passover (Numbers 28:19)
- With the new grain/firstfruits offering at the Feast of Weeks (Numbers 28:27)
- At the Feast of Trumpets/Rosh Hashanah (Numbers 29:1)
- At the new moon (Numbers 29:6)

People who gave burnt offerings in the OT narrative include

- The people of **Beth Shemesh** after the ark was returned from the philistines

1 Samuel 6:14

*Then the cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and stood there; a large stone was there. So they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a **burnt offering** to the Lord.*

- **Samuel**

When the philistines were preparing to attack Israel, Samuel called the people to return to the Lord and offered burnt offerings

1 Samuel 7:3

*Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you **return** to the Lord with all your hearts, then **put away** the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines."*

1 Samuel 7:9-10

*And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a **whole burnt offering** to the Lord. Then Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord answered him.*

*Now as Samuel was offering up **the burnt offering**, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the Lord thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel.*

- **Saul**

1 Samuel 13:9

*So Saul said, "Bring a **burnt offering** and peace offerings here to me." And he offered the **burnt offering**.*

Saul offered burnt offering but was not truly committed to the Lord. It is possible to pretend to be committed to the Lord when we are not.

- **David**

After successfully bringing the ark to Jerusalem, David offered burnt offering to the Lord as a symbol of the nation's commitment to God

2 Samuel 6:18

*And when David had finished offering **burnt offerings** and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts.*

- **Solomon**

First when he was desperate for the Lord after the death of his father and his being installed as King

1 Kings 3:4

*Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place: **Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings** on that altar.*

Later at the dedication of the temple

2 Chronicles 7:1

*When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed **the burnt offering** and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple.*

- **Naaman**

After experiencing divine healing, Naaman committed himself to no longer offer burnt offerings to other gods. It is clear that it is possible to devote ourselves to the wrong things. Same was true of those in Judah who offered burnt offerings to Baal, (2kings 10) and of king Ahaz who erected an altar like the one in Damascus and offered burnt offerings to his false god in (2kings 16)

- **Hezekiah**

When Hezekiah restored worship in Israel

2 Chronicles 29:27

*Then Hezekiah commanded them to offer the **burnt offering** on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord also began, with the trumpets and with the instruments of David king of Israel.*

- **When the temple was rebuilt in the days of Zerubbabel**

Ezra 3:5

*Afterwards they offered the regular **burnt offering**, and those for New Moons and for all the appointed feasts of the Lord that were consecrated, and those of everyone who willingly offered a freewill offering to the Lord.*

Clearly the application for this offering was commitment to God.

It seems that this is the offering referred to in the exhortation of Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

the proper application from this text is to examine our commitment to the Lord. Have you received Christ? Have you in turn surrendered yourself to Christ? Are you daily offering yourself to the Lord for Him to sanctify you and to use you for His glory?

Chapter 2 - grain offering

Leviticus 2:1

“When anyone offers a grain offering to the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it.

This was also a voluntary or free will offering

A few details regarding this offering are worth our attention

If it is an **uncooked** offering, the priest was to take a handful and burn it on the altar as a sweet aroma. The remainder was a gift for the priests

If it is a **cooked** offering, it is to be cooked without leaven, a portion burned and the remainder a gift for the priests.

No specific amount of grain was required for an offering; people were free to give what they had.

The grain offering could be personalized as each gift would differ from the next. The worshippers determined how much to give and how to prepare the gift.

It was to be given out of a person's free will, just as our worship is our free will offering to God today.

Blood had to be shed for the remission of sins to take place, so a grain offering would not serve the same purpose as a burnt offering.

Instead, the purpose of a grain offering was to worship God and acknowledge His provision.

Two conditions are worth our attention

Leviticus 2:11

*“No grain offering which you bring to the Lord shall be made with **leaven**, for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey in any offering to the Lord made by fire.*

Leaven was forbidden from the grain offering. Leaven, or yeast causes dough to rise. It works by permeating its way through the whole lump. Within Scripture leaven is used as a type of sin. It pictures the way sin works in an individual and a congregation.

1 Corinthians 5:6

Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

Galatians 5:9

A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

In the case of **Galatians** the leaven is referring to the believers going back into the things they were once saved from.

For them it was a works based religion, for many of us it is the sinful lifestyle or practices that once dominated our lives.

A little compromise will bring about big disasters

In the case of **1 Corinthians** it was tolerance of sexual misconduct among believers that was considered leaven and was in danger of corrupting the entire church

What does the Bible teach about proper sexual conduct?

It was designed by God to be practiced between one man and one woman within the confines of a marriage relationship. Any

sexual activity outside of that is sin and will work like leaven in your personal life and in the church as a whole.

Jesus also referred to leaven. He called it "*hypocrisy*".

Faking spirituality instead of dealing with sin is a form of leaven that will corrupt the individual and weaken the church

Luke 12:1

*In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the **leaven** of the Pharisees, which is **hypocrisy**."*

A spiritual principle is found here.

The church as a whole is weakened by the conduct of the individuals.

This is illustrated in the events of Joshua 7 where Achan takes the accursed things and hides them in his tent. The entire camp of Israel is weakened by one man's sin.

Secondly notice that the grain offering was always to be seasoned with salt

Leviticus 2:13

And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt.

No explanation for this is given, however elsewhere in scripture we read regarding salt

Numbers 18:19

*"All the hallow offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer to the Lord, I have given to you and your sons and daughters with you as an ordinance forever; it is a covenant of **salt** forever before the Lord with you and your descendants with you."*

2Kings 2 - Elisha healed the waters by dumping salt into it

Mark 9:49

*For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with **salt**.*

It seems that the primary purpose of salt was to increase the value of the sacrifice

Chapter 3 - peace offering

We use the phrase, "Peace Offering" today when we have offended a friend and bring something to show we are sorry.

Many husbands have a standing order at the florists because of continual mistakes in communication with their wives.

The peace offering in the covenant with Israel was the exact opposite. It was not an attempt to earn the favor of God but a way of saying thanks for the goodness of God

Peace offering could be offered from the herd, the flock or from the goats

Leviticus 3:2-3

And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood all around on the altar.

Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire to the Lord. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails

Moses picks up the topic of the peace offering again in Lev 7:11-21

We are told that the peace offering was to be offered with both leavened and unleavened bread. The leaven was symbolic of the fact that although we are forgiven we are still sinners and we bring our flaws into all our relationships

Once offered, the grain offering belonged to the priests who would offer it as a heave offering. Heave offering simply meant they raised it in their hands before the Lord, which serves as a picture of worship.

This offering was a picture of fellowship. A portion was offered to the Lord, a portion given to the priest and a portion eaten by the one making the offering.

Roy Zuck points out

Most sacrifices in the Old Testament system were not eaten by worshipers, but the peace offering was meant to be eaten—only a portion of the animal or grain brought to the altar was burned; the rest was given back to the worshiper and to the poor and hungry.

One condition was cleanness

Leviticus 7:20

*But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering that belongs to the Lord, while he is **unclean**, that person shall be cut off from his people.*

For us to enjoy fellowship with God we must first be cleansed of our sins

Isaiah 59:1-2

*Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. **But your iniquities have separated you from your God**; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.*

To maintain fellowship with God we must confess sin and turn from it

1 John 1:6

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

1 John 1:8-9

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Our salvation is not in jeopardy every time we fail, but we lose the benefits of fellowship when we are involved in sin.

Saul, because he harbored sin in his life was unable to detect the voice of God when he needed it most.

Lot missed out on the protection God promised and provided for Abraham because he wandered from him in search of greener pastures

We often wonder how God could allow us to go through certain things, voice at times we fail to realize that some of our difficulties are brought about as a result of our wandering from Jesus. Sometimes they are His way of chastening us to get our attention, other times they are consequences of trying to navigate in the dark without the voice of God.

Fortunately His mercy is new daily and He is able to bring blessing out of difficulty. He can even restore the years the locust has eaten. It is not too late to turn back to God.

The next 2 offerings were compulsory and not voluntary: Nine times the text states the contributor will be forgiven; These two offerings were designed to restore broken fellowship.

Chapter 4 - the sin offering

Sin is sometimes defined as **missing the mark**. With our best efforts we still fall short of perfection. We find the most gifted and highly trained athletes miss the mark on a weekly basis. A careless pitch cost the team the game, the series and the season, or a misplaced pass results in the game winning touchdown for the wrong team

The sin offering was provided so Israel could receive pardon for **unintentional** sin

Leviticus 4:2

*“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘If a person sins **unintentionally** against any of the commandments of the Lord in anything which ought not to be done, and does any of them,*

Moses will explain what to do if the sin is committed by an individual, the whole congregation, a ruler or one of the common people. In each case the following were involved

1. A sacrifice
2. Laying hands on the sacrifice as an admittance of guilt
3. Taking the hide outside the camp symbolizing the removal of the guilt from the sinner

Three times we read

"So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him."

This offering speaks to the fact that we not only sin but we are by nature sinners. The bible teaches that sin was passed down to us from Adam and has affected all of us. Reforms are good and necessary both individually and nationally. But reforms cannot change our nature. We can become better husbands, fathers, neighbors and citizens but until we are born again we still have a nature that is unredeemed and we will be forbidden access to heaven.

Jesus came not to reform us but to transform us. He took our sins on the cross and offers us his perfect nature when we trust in Him.

We must be born again in order to have a new nature and be fit for eternity

The obvious question that arises from chapter four is, what about sins that are committed intentionally? Is there forgiveness for those?

Chapter 5 - the trespass offering

Trespass - to enter someone else's property without permission. To step on land that is forbidden.

In our day and age it usually means ignoring a warning and climbing a fence. The same is true regarding sin.

- When we trespass, or sin presumptuously we are ignoring what we know the Scripture teaches and the voice of the Spirit who is warning us not to continue down that road.
- It is possible to drown out the voice of the Spirit through continued disobedience, but that will never change the written word. Sin will always be sin even when we stop feeling bad about committing it.

What was Israel to do when they sinned presumptuously?

After giving a few examples of presumptuous sins, Moses declares

Leviticus 5:5-6

*“And it shall be, when he is guilty in any of these matters, that he shall **confess** that he has sinned in that thing; and he shall bring his **trespass** offering to the Lord for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats as a sin offering. So the priest shall make **atonement** for him concerning his sin.*

Atonement involved both confession of sin and bringing a sin offering.

The details of the offering were the same as those of a sin offering.

- Lay hands on the animal
- Kill it
- Sprinkle the blood
- Burn the offering
- Remove the carcass.

But another interesting detail is revealed regarding the trespass offering

Leviticus 5:7

*“If **he is not able** to bring a lamb, then he shall bring to the Lord, for his trespass which he has committed, two turtledoves or two young pigeons: one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering.*

Leviticus 5:11

*‘But **if he is not able** to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then he who sinned shall bring for his offering one-tenth of an ephah of*

fine flour as a sin offering. He shall put no oil on it, nor shall he put frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering.

God made pardon available to anyone who sinned. A poor person was not barred from coming, but sacrifice had to be made and sin had to be confessed

When we sin we do not need another offering. Jesus was sacrificed one time for all men and all sin. We do need however to acknowledge and confess sin

David's story illustrates this. After he trespassed with Bathsheba and hid his sin he was in a condition of spiritual dryness and emotional suffering. He wrote of that time saying

Psalms 32:3-4

When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah

Psalms 32:5

I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

Sins requiring restitution

Leviticus 5:15-16

*"If a person commits a trespass, and sins unintentionally in regard to the holy things of the Lord, then he shall bring to the Lord as his trespass offering a ram without blemish from the flocks, **with your valuation in shekels** of silver according to the shekel of the sanctuary, as a trespass offering. And **he shall make restitution** for the harm that he has done in regard to the holy thing, and shall add one-fifth to it and give it to the priest. So the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him.*

Leviticus 6:4-5

*then it shall be, because he has sinned and is guilty, that he shall **restore what he has stolen, or the thing which he has extorted, or what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he has sworn falsely. He shall restore its full value, add one-fifth more to it, and give it to whomever it belongs, on the day of his trespass offering.***

Sometimes it is necessary to do more than say I am sorry to God and others. Sometimes additional things must be done.

Our forgiveness is not dependent upon other things but they are necessary to maintain fellowship

Jesus said if we are praying and someone has a problem with us we need to leave the gift and go fix the relationship. Often we don't think we were wrong but the other person views things from a differing perspective. We need to do what is necessary to fix broken relationships

Matthew 5:23-24

Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,

leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.