



## Christ The Perfect Sacrifice

Summary: Christ both fulfills the expectation of all the Old Testament sacrifices as well as models how we are to follow in His example.

Today we'll be examining the five main sacrifices as detailed in chapters 1-5 of the book of Leviticus. Now I know that most of us, when we are reading through the Bible would prefer to skip over this book as it doesn't seem to offer much by way of inspiration or direction. In fact, most of the Jews living at the time of Moses probably would have felt the same.

This book, as its name portrays, is a book dealing primarily with the rules and regulations that governed the Levitical priests. Which means that its primary audience was not the common Israelite, nor the Christian. This book was written for the priest and the Levite. So it shouldn't surprise us too much that it seems to cover material that is largely not directly applicable, and perhaps less interesting to us.

However, when Jesus said in Matthew 5:17 that He did not come to destroy the Law and Prophets, but rather to fulfill them, He gives us a good reason to go back and examine what it was that He fulfilled.

Paul also gives us good reason to go back and examine the old in light of Christ when He says in Col 2:17 that those things were a ["shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ."](#)

And finally, we do well to remember that ["All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."](#) Which means that though we may find parts of the Old Testament in particular difficult to understand or gain much benefit from, they are none-the-less also written for our benefit.

Perhaps you're familiar with the old adage that "Nothing in this world worth having comes easy." And so it is with the study of such passages as these in Leviticus. The hard work of study, digging deeper in passages like these, will give you a valuable reward, one well worth the time and effort. With that being said, let's start by getting an overview of these first 5 chapters of Leviticus.

The theme of Leviticus is all about the Holiness of God. That He is perfect, holy, and in all ways unapproachable by us due to our sin. However, He is also merciful and provides a way for us to have fellowship with Him. In the Old Testament this way was through animal sacrifice. But these were only pointers to the true and perfect sacrifice of Christ. This idea is fully explored in Hebrews 10, which we went through as a church not too long ago.

In Hebrews 10 it says, “<sup>1</sup> For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. <sup>4</sup> For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, <sup>14</sup> For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.” (vs 1, 4, 12, & 14)

In this, we see the temporary nature of those early sacrifices as well as their intended purpose, to help us yearn for the true and perfect sacrifice which they foreshadowed. Let’s dig into these 5 sacrifices in Leviticus and see how they point us to our perfect sacrifice, Jesus.

If your Bible has headings on the various chapters or sections of Scripture, you’ll easily note how each of the first five chapters covers a different Sacrifice. Chapter 1 is all about the Burnt Offering, 2 is about the Grain Offering, 3 is about the Peace Offering, 4 is about the Sin Offering and 5 is about the Trespass Offering. We’ll dig into each of these and explore what they were, what makes them unique or distinct from each other, but most importantly, how they point us to Christ.

### **The Burnt Offering (Lev 1:1-9)**

“<sup>1</sup> Now the LORD called to Moses, and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of the livestock—of the herd and of the flock. <sup>3</sup> “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. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> He shall kill the bull before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that *is* by the door of the tabernacle of meeting. <sup>6</sup> And he shall skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces. <sup>7</sup> The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay the wood in order on the fire. <sup>8</sup> Then the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall

lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that *is* on the fire upon the altar; <sup>9</sup> but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.” (Lev 1:1-9)

The rest of this chapter describes similar processes for how to conduct a burnt offering when it’s a sheep or dove. But the important thing to grasp, and what is unique about this sacrifice can be seen in verses 3, 4 & 9.

Something we’ll see time and again, and perhaps it is something obvious, is that all these sacrifices were to be blameless. This points to the perfection of Christ, the holiness of God, and that what was offered needed to resemble and signify this.

But what is significant and unique about this sacrifice was first, that it was to be offered by one’s own free will. In other words, you weren’t ever “required” to offer this, but if you desired to, you could. Often, we see God’s heart for our giving exemplified in things like this; that God doesn’t want us to give when it is done begrudgingly or out of a sense of compulsion or guilt. As it says in 2 Corinthians 9, “God loves a cheerful giver.”

The next aspect we see, in verse 4, was that the function of this sacrifice was to make atonement. In other words, to bring you and God into greater oneness. To reconcile the two of you together. Other sacrifices are also noted for this purpose.

The third and final aspect of this sacrifice, as seen in verse 9, is that it was to be completely consumed by the fire. None if it was for eating. It was all to be burned. This aspect of this sacrifice has given it the reputation for depicting Total Dedication, Full Commitment or Absolute Surrender. We’ll touch more on the application of these things to Christ and to us in a bit. But first, we’ll continue to explore the other sacrifices.

### **The Grain Offering**

As we look at the Grain Offering next, we’ll read chapter 2, verses 1-3 & 11-13.

“<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> He shall bring it to Aaron’s sons, the priests, one of whom shall take from it his handful of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. And the priest shall burn *it as* a memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. <sup>3</sup> The rest of the grain offering *shall be* Aaron’s and his sons’. *It is* most holy of the offerings to the LORD made by fire. <sup>11</sup> “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. <sup>12</sup> As for the offering of the firstfruits, you shall offer them to the LORD, but they shall not be burned on the altar for a sweet aroma. <sup>13</sup> 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.” (Lev 2:1-3, 11-13)

The other verses in this chapter provide instruction for various ways that this offering was prepared, such as cooked in a pan, baked in an oven, etc. But there are 3 significant things to point out in this sacrifice. The first is that a grain offering needed to be made with Fine Flour, in other words, this flour needed to be sifted and any impurities needed to be removed. This, for the grain offering, was similar to offering an animal “without blemish”.

Beyond the purity requirement for this sacrifice there were 3 ingredients it should always have, and 2 that it should never have. It should always be made with oil, frankincense and salt, and never contain leaven or honey.

The significance of these ingredients is important as they take on greater meaning throughout the scriptures. For example, oil is something that points to the presence of the Holy Spirit, Frankincense reminds us of the prayers of the saints, and salt as the witness that we have to a lost world.

Leaven and Honey were both to be left out of this sacrifice due to the fact that in their nature they both ferment and cause things to artificially puff up through the process of decay. Leaven throughout the Scriptures is seen as a type of sin or false doctrine that spreads and corrupts whatever it is in.

In the Grain Offering we see a picture of being Tested and Sanctified. Once again, we’ll hold off for now tying these things to Christ and seeing their application to us as well. If you’ll bear with me, we have 3 more sacrifices to examine first.

### **The Peace Offering**

As we look at the Peace Offering next, we’ll read 3:1-5 & 7:11-15.

“<sup>1</sup> “When his offering is a sacrifice of a peace offering, if he offers it of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; <sup>5</sup> and Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which *is* on the wood that *is* on the fire, *as* an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.”

Ch 7 “<sup>11</sup> “This *is* the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which he shall offer to the LORD: <sup>12</sup> If he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, or cakes of blended flour mixed with oil. <sup>13</sup> Besides the cakes, *as his offering he shall offer leavened bread* with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offering. <sup>14</sup> And from it he shall offer one cake from each offering *as* a heave offering to the LORD. It shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offering. <sup>15</sup> “The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day it is offered. He shall not leave any of it until morning.” (Lev 3:1-5 & 7:11-15)

The Peace Offering, sometimes called the Fellowship Offering was unique in that it was to be eaten by the person offering it. In this ‘shared meal’ with the Lord the symbol of peace or fellowship with God is the key distinction. A couple other aspects to point out is the emphasis on what belongs to God. God says in verses 16-17 of chapter 3 that the fat and the blood belong to Him and are not to be eaten by the worshiper. Fat, and the offering of it are mentioned 16 times in this chapter! Now, I realize there may be a few vegetarians here this morning, and I don’t mean to cause offense, but in my experience, one of the best smelling aromas I’ve encountered is the smell of cooking bacon. I can give an experiential AMEN to verse 16 that says that when the fat is on the alter, it gives off a sweet aroma!

Perhaps you noticed that in verse 13 of chapter 7 it spoke of offering leavened bread. We had just read that no grain offering should have leaven in it in 2:11, so how does this seeming contradiction work out? The answer is both simple and profound in its meaning. The offering of leavened bread here referred to was said to be a “heave offering” meaning that it was not something burned on the altar. In other words, the leavened bread was lifted up and down by the priest and then eaten by the priest (or perhaps also shared in by the worshiper). This depiction of leavened bread being dedicated to the lord (but not put through the fire) shows us how we, as sinners, full of leaven, can come before the Lord and offer ourselves, but not as a sacrifice for sin, but as a demonstration of our desire for peace and fellowship with God.

### **The Sin Offering**

The fourth sacrifice is that of the Sin Offering. For this we’ll read 4:1-7, 11-12

“<sup>1</sup> Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> “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, <sup>3</sup> if the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer to the LORD for his sin which he has sinned a young bull without blemish as a sin offering. <sup>4</sup> He shall bring the bull to the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, lay his hand on the bull’s head, and kill the bull before the LORD. <sup>5</sup> Then the anointed priest shall take some of the bull’s blood and bring it to the tabernacle of meeting. <sup>6</sup> The priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil of the sanctuary. <sup>7</sup> And the priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of meeting; and he shall pour the remaining blood of the bull at the base of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

<sup>11</sup> But the bull’s hide and all its flesh, with its head and legs, its entrails and offal— <sup>12</sup> the whole bull he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned.”

The whole of this chapter deals with the general offering for general sin. It’s important to note that the sin mentioned here is “unintentional sin” or another way for us to understand this is “sin that is not premeditated.” Sin that was done deliberately and willfully would bear its consequences by the standards that the law demanded.

Throughout this chapter the description of this sacrifice is given for various peoples. For example, it begins with the priest then goes to the congregation of Israel, dealt with as a whole. Then the example of a ruler of the people is given, followed by the common individual. In the first two instances, that of the priest and that of the whole congregation, a Bull is required. This would have been a more costly sacrifice thus showing a greater weight to the sin done in these two scenarios. For the ruler and common person, a goat or lamb could be offered, still costly, but not as much as the Bull.

There are two aspects to bring up about this sacrifice. The first is seen in verses 6 & 7. The description of how the priest was to dip his finger in the blood and all the various places he was to apply that blood reminds us of how messy sin is. Also in verse 12 it says that the carcass of the animal was to be carried outside of the camp and burned outside. This speaks of the separation that sin causes. So, in summary, with this sacrifice we see the Cost, the Mess and the Separation associated with sin.



## **The Trespass Offering**

That brings us to the fifth sacrifice, the Trespass Offering. For this we'll read 5:1-2, 5-7

“<sup>1</sup> “If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter—if he does not tell it, he bears guilt. <sup>2</sup> “Or if a person touches any unclean thing, whether it is the carcass of an unclean beast, or the carcass of unclean livestock, or the carcass of unclean creeping things, and he is unaware of it, he also shall be unclean and guilty.”

“<sup>5</sup> “And it shall be, when he is guilty in any of these matters, that he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing; <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> “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.”

The Trespass offering was different than the sin offering in that the Sin offering dealt more with Sin on the bigger picture, the general sense of sin, but in this passage we see very specific aspects of sin that are listed. Whether there was sin in hearing, touching, or speaking, a confession and sacrifice were needed.

The rest of this chapter speaks to how there was no excuse to keep you from making things right. If you couldn't afford the lamb, you could offer 2 doves, if you couldn't afford the doves, you could offer a grain offering (vs 11). God didn't want the cost of the offering to deter you from making things right with Him.

## **Christ In The Sacrifices**

Now we finally get to the good part. You've probably picked up on the hints along the way, but there is such beauty in how each of these sacrifices points us to our Savior. How He completely fulfills these in His life, death and resurrection.

As a fitting backdrop to the life of Christ, Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 3:16,

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

God was manifested in the flesh,

Justified in the Spirit,

Seen by angels,

Preached among the Gentiles,

Believed on in the world,

Received up in glory.”

When we consider the miracle of the incarnate Jesus, that “God was manifested in the flesh” that He left the heavens and His glory and came to a broken and sinful world. We get a glimpse of the first sacrifice, the Burnt Offering. Jesus committed Himself totally and completely. His purpose, life & death were all determined by Him, and when He put on human flesh, we see His full determination to do what needed to be done and what no one else was able to do.

When it speaks of Him being “Justified in the Spirit” our thoughts turn to the time of His wilderness temptation. The devil sought to sift Him like wheat. But He was found pure, He went into the wilderness to be tested and was proven and justified. His time in the wilderness was preceded by the descending of the Spirit onto Him at His Baptism and the offering up of prayers, just as the grain offering was accompanied by oil and frankincense. The testimony of His witness continues to be salt to all of us who now follow in His example.

When He was seen by angels and preached among the Gentiles we see how He was able to bring fellowship between the holy and the profane. God and man are brought into fellowship through Christ. Throughout His ministry He often ate with tax collectors and sinners... even at times with the religious elite. He was no respecter of persons but sought to call any and all who were willing to follow Him and to know the Father through Him.

When He was believed on in the world, the gospel and the truth and reality of what His sacrifice meant to the world was now fully realized. He was the final and ultimate Sin offering. Though better than just an offering for “unintentional sin” He paid for those we did knowingly and intentionally. For His sacrifice was far better, far purer, and more perfect in every way. He paid the cost, he bore our mess, and He experienced the separation that we deserved that we might experience the restoration that He offers.

Finally, when He was received up in glory, to show that His sacrifice was complete and fully accepted, He sat down at the right hand of the Father. Yet even in this place He continues to intercede for us praying for us and pointing to His payment as the covering for each trespass that we may still offend in.

### **The Christian and the Living Sacrifice**

We are also called to be like Christ. Not in attempt to “pay our way”... but to walk in His footsteps. And just as Paul exhorts us in Romans 12:1 “[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.*” We now offer our lives back to God.

For us to walk through the sacrifices, we see that the path for us is the reverse of the path that Jesus walked. For He started with the Burnt Offering and His total commitment to make atonement, but for us, we start with the conviction of sin. In fact, it is usually the conviction of a specific sin, a trespass, that begins to open our eyes to our brokenness and need for God.

Once our eyes have been opened to our specific sin, we soon realize that we have a sin nature and that it's not just one sin that is separating us from God, but many, many things that we've done, both unintentionally and intentionally. Our very nature is sinful!

But through the gift of Christ's sacrifice we are given the opportunity to have Peace with God. True fellowship. Our relationship is restored in Christ and we can now share meals together. We have access to His throne night and day.

But we, like the grain offering, must still be sifted. We go through a process of Sanctification in our lives that continues to reveal our imperfections and the leaven of our hearts. But, with the oil of the Holy Spirit poured out upon our lives, and the prayers of frankincense to be offered up daily before the throne, we continue to persevere through this season, growing more like Christ with each passing day.

As we grow in Christ and our fellowship and refinement in Him continue, we press on with the goal of total and full commitment to the Lord in every aspect of our lives. With each season of life, He beckons to us to give all unto Him. I started by giving Him my singleness, I then had to give Him my marriage, then He asked to have my career. Then when kids came along He called me to surrender those to Him too. As I've grown in Him, I've seen how when He is Lord of all and every aspect of my life, I do not need to fear or worry, I have peace and joy unexplainable.

My hope and prayer for each of you is that wherever you are at on this journey, that you'll continue to grow and take the next step. One that brings you closer to your Savior and deeper in your experience of Him. Let's pray.



## Application and Discussion Questions

### Leviticus 1-5 Christ The Perfect Sacrifice

- Before today's sermon, what was your opinion of Leviticus (and other books like it)? Has your opinion changed at all after seeing some of the treasures to be mined from its pages?
  
- Have you experienced working through a hard task where, in the end, you received a valuable experience/reward? (If so, share an example or two)
  
- Pick one of the 5 sacrifices from Leviticus 1-5 and read through the whole chapter. (There are even additional comments about each in chapters 6 & 7).
  - What stood out to from the chapter?
  - What questions do you have about it?
  - Can you find anything significant to point you to Christ and His fulfillment of this sacrifice?
  - What do you see by way of application for you as a Christian?
  
- Read Hebrews 10 in its entirety and consider how Christ's sacrifice is better than these Old Testament sacrifices.
  
- Which one of the 5 sacrifices do you find most relates to where you are at in your walk with Christ right now. Why is that?
  
- Is there anything that God is calling you to sacrifice today? Something that, if you were to lay down and give up, would lead to increased fellowship with Him?