

Jesus, Our Ultimate Sacrifice
Leviticus 1-7

Introduction:

We are reading through the Bible and I am preaching from a passage we have read the previous week.

Be glad for what you have read, not sorry for what you have not read. But keep reading.

What is Leviticus all about? God is like the sun; glorious and dangerous. But God delights in us and wants us to fellowship with him. Unlike the sun, which is both good and dangerous, we know how to approach God because he has provided the way through offerings.

The book of Leviticus opens up with a description of five different offerings for Old Covenant worship. These offerings are the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering. Three of these offerings relate in particular to sin and its effects.

Offerings are the way Israel approaches God. There were basically two types of offerings that are found in these first 7 chapters -

- 1 - *Thank you* = Grain & Fellowship Offering
- 2 - *I'm Sorry* = Burnt, Sin and Guilt Offering

First: The Burnt Offering. 1:1-17

Meat was a luxury in Israel. To burn an entire animal was a real sacrifice – vs 9b, 13b, 17b

- The most important offering is the burnt offering
- Three kinds of animals could be offered
 - Bulls 1-5 (rich)
 - Sheep and goats 10 (middle class)
 - Turtledoves and pigeons 14 (poor)
- Worshippers brought the animal to the priest
- The priest laid his hands on it and confessed the sin of the offeror. v 4
 - The animal is given to God, resigned to his service
 - The person acknowledged that he deserved to die if God required it
 - The offeror depended on the animal as an accepted substitutionary sacrifice
- Burnt offerings were propitiatory = appeasing wrath and conciliating favor

For God to forgive sin at the expense of his holiness would be inconsistent with his character. An inconsistent God is untrustworthy. He is simultaneously good and holy. His goodness desires fellowship with sinners. His holiness demands that sinners die. God satisfied his own holiness and exercised goodness by creating a way to fellowship, in these sacrifices (2 Chron 29:7-8).

Ephesians 5:2 - *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

1 Peter 1:18-19 - *you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*

Second: The Sin Offering. Lev 4:1-12

‘Sin offering’ is a good translation of the Hebrew but what the sin offering does is understood better by the words ‘purification offering.’ The sin offering purified the sanctuary and removed the defilement/stain of sin that occurred when Israel broke God’s covenant.

- God is holy and can’t dwell in the midst of uncleanness (22:3)
- When Israel sinned, they stained themselves with uncleanness
- The burnt offering satisfied God’s holiness
- The sin offering removes the pollution of sin from the tabernacle where Israel met God
- Both it and the utensils used in worship were cleansed by the blood of the sacrifice, the sinner was made clean again and able to stand before God

Hebrews 10:19-22 - *Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*

Third: The Day of Atonement: Leviticus 16:7-10

The day of Atonement occurred once a year on the tenth day of July (for Americans). It was a ritual that atoned for Israel’s sins.

- Aaron bathed and put on special garments. 4
- He offered a bull as a sacrifice for himself and his family 6, 11
- The blood was sprinkled on the ark of the covenant
- Two goats were brought to Aaron
- Aaron slaughtered one of the goats and sprinkled its blood on the ark of the covenant
- He placed his hands on the head of the second goat, confessed Israel’s sins and sent it out into the wilderness. 21

- Jesus is our High Priest who clothed himself in the garment of flesh
- He sacrifices his own blood which was presented to the Father on our behalf

- Jesus is the propitiation goat – our sins are *covered* by the blood and our guilt is removed
- Jesus is the expiation goat – our sins are *taken away* by the blood and its power is broken

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save me from its guilt and power.*

Conclusion:

These details were specific, and these offerings were horrendous and together they were wearying. And God intended them to be so. Again, He’s setting us up for Jesus.

- Just like the offerings were specific, God is specific about Jesus as the only way to heaven.

- The offerings were horrendous to best picture the horror of sin and its price
- The weariness set us up to say, “Yeah Jesus!” when he arrives

After Jesus’s death, the offerings were rendered symbolic and without effect. Yet many Christian Jews felt nostalgia for the Temple. Could one single sacrifice truly be trusted?

Hebrews 10:11-14 - *And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.*

Many thought they could return to the Temple and find some aspect of salvation. The writer says, ‘No.’ Jesus alone has completed the work of forgiveness and removal of sin.

18 - *Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.*

Community Groups:

- 1 – How would you recommend reading through the Bible in a year to a friend?
- 2 – What difficulties are you encountering and how are you overcoming them?
- 3 – What #1 new thing have you learned?
- 4 - What is your #1 takeaway from reading through the Bible this year?
- 5 – Why did God establish the offerings?
- 6 – What do the grain and fellowship offerings say?
- 7 – What do the burnt, sin and guilt offerings say?
- 8 – What 3 kinds of animals could be offered in the burnt offering and why?
- 9 – What does the burnt offering do?
- 10 – How is Jesus represented in the burnt offering?
- 11 – Why do we want God to keep his word about sin?
- 12 – If the burnt offering is for God, for whom is the sin offering?
- 13 – What happened to the first offering on the day of Atonement?
- 14 – What happened to the second offering on the Day of Atonement?
- 15 – How is Jesus represented in each of these offerings?
- 16 – Why was God so specific about things in the book of Leviticus?
- 17 – Why was the sacrificial system so horrendous?

