

Set Before
November 5, 2017
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Leviticus 1:3-9; 2:1-3; 3:1-5

- Today we begin a four-week study in Leviticus (right after Exodus.)
- I sometimes refer to Leviticus as the “great stumbling block” for annual read-through-the-Bible plans. You start in Genesis and get bogged down in Leviticus.
- It’s no wonder people struggle with this little book, just listen to some of the chapter headings:
 - Clean and unclean animals; purification after childbirth; laws for cleansing lepers; laws for cleansing houses; laws against eating blood.
 - How about this: ²⁷ *You shall not round off the hair on your temples or mar the edges of your beard.* ²⁸ *You shall not make any cuts on your body for the dead or tattoo yourselves...?’*
 - Or this: ¹⁹ *“...You shall not let your cattle breed with a different kind. You shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor shall you wear a garment of cloth made of two kinds of material?”* ⁱⁱ
- These were laws for the Jews in that day and most of them don’t apply to us. People may ask, why should we read the book of Leviticus?
- Reason #1: It’s a part of Holy Scripture! #2 - It also speaks to us today.
- In Leviticus 20:26 (ESV) God says to His people: ²⁶ *You shall be holy to me, for I the Lord am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.*
- God is holy, so how do unholy people approach and have relationship with Him? “[The Life Application Study Bible tells us] —*first sin must be dealt with. Thus the opening chapters of Leviticus give detailed instructions for offering sacrifices, which were the active symbols of repentance and obedience. Whether bulls, grain, goats, or sheep, the sacrificial offerings had to be perfect, with no defects or bruises—pictures of the ultimate sacrifice to come, Jesus, the Lamb of God. Jesus has come and opened the way to God by giving up his life as the final sacrifice in our place. True worship and oneness with God begin as we confess our sin and accept Christ as the only one who can redeem us from sin and help us approach God.*” ⁱⁱⁱ
- This morning we’ll look at how the sacrifices of Old Testament times enabled the Israelites to have relationship with our Holy God.
- We will look at three kinds of sacrifices: burnt offerings, grain offerings, and fellowship offerings. As we learn about these sacrifices, we won’t just learn facts. We’ll ask: What does it say? What does it mean? How should it change us?
- The Big Idea: God is pleased when His people show Him gratitude and devotion.

Leviticus 1:3–9 (ESV)

³“If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the Lord. ⁴He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. ⁵Then he shall kill the bull before the Lord, and Aaron’s sons the priests shall bring the blood and throw the blood against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. ⁶Then he shall flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces, ⁷and the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. ⁸And Aaron’s sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head, and the fat, on the wood that is on the fire on the altar; ⁹but its entrails and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord.

- The Hebrew word for burnt offering literally means “ascent” (upward.)
- A burnt offering was totally burned up in the fire. Literally, “up in smoke.” That made it the most costly kind of sacrifice.
- *“A person could give a burnt offering at any time. It was a sacrifice of general atonement—an acknowledgement of 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 the Israelites as a whole...”^{iv}*
- **Why an animal with no spots or blemishes? What does the quality of an offering say about the one offering it?**
- **Why did the one bringing the offering place a hand on the head of the animal? What is atonement? Why all this blood on the altar? How is Jesus, our sacrifice like the Old Testament sacrifices? How is he different?**
- End of Leviticus 1:9: The burning animal made a “pleasing aroma” to God.
- Faithlife Study Bible: *“The desired outcome of the sacrifice is God’s acceptance (ratson) of the worshiper. Acceptance means God has a favorable disposition toward the person. Failure to properly observe the sacrificial procedures could result in the sacrifice not being accepted (see Lev 7:18). Rote observance of the rituals also did not guarantee acceptance if the people drifted away from God (see Jer 14:12; Amos 5:22).”^v “The distinction over whether the aroma pleases or appeases Yahweh is significant. Something pleasing Yahweh is much different from something appeasing Him. A delight brings enjoyment and pleasure (without reference to wrath). Appeasement refers to allaying His wrath (compare Gen 8:21; Lev 26:31).”^{vi}*
- Our goal in worshiping God is to restore our relationship with Him and please Him (pleasing aroma.) His acceptance of our worship depends on our motives.

Leviticus 2:1–3 (ESV)

Laws for Grain Offerings

2 “When anyone brings a grain offering as an offering to the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour. He shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it ² and bring it to Aaron’s sons the priests. And he shall take from it a handful of the fine flour and oil, with all of its frankincense, and the priest shall burn this as its memorial portion on the altar, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord. ³ But the rest of the grain offering shall be for Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the Lord’s food offerings.

- Life Application Study Bible: *“The grain offering accompanied all burnt offerings and was a gift of thanks to God. It reminded the people that their food came from God and that they owed their lives to him. Three kinds of grain offerings are listed: (1) fine flour with oil and frankincense, (2) baked cakes or wafers of fine flour and oil, and (3) roasted kernels of grain with oil and frankincense. The absence of yeast (leaven) symbolized the absence of sin, and the oil symbolized God’s presence. Part of the grain offering was burned on the altar as a gift to God, and the rest was eaten by the priests. The offerings helped support them in their work.”^{vii}*
- The grain offering reminded them their very sustenance came from God’s hand. **How does this relate to us as we give offerings today?**
- (Wiersbe) *“The frankincense that was burned with the memorial portion represents prayer (Ps. 141:2; Rev. 5:8), a reminder of the petition “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matt. 6:11). But the meal offering was not presented alone; it accompanied one of the sacrifices that involved the shedding of blood. Our hard work can never purchase salvation or earn the blessing of God; for apart from the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin (Heb. 9:22)”^{viii}*
- We bring God our “first fruits” of the blessings He has given us to thank Him, but nothing we bring or do covers our sin. Only the blood that Jesus shed on the cross covers our sin. We only have that covering if we’ve accepted His free gift of salvation and count Him as our Savior and Lord.
- In the burnt offering no one eats. In the grain offering the priests eat. In the fellowship or peace offering, everyone gets to partake of the sacrifice.

Leviticus 3:1–5 (ESV)

Laws for Peace Offerings

3 “If his offering is a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offers an animal from the herd, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord. ² And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and kill it at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and Aaron’s sons the priests shall throw the blood against the sides of the altar. ³ And from the sacrifice of the peace offering, as a food offering to the Lord, he shall offer the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, ⁴ and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins, and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys. ⁵ Then Aaron’s sons shall burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering, which is on the wood on the fire; it is a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord.

- (Wiersbe) *“After the priest had completed the sacrifice, a large portion of the meat went to him; the rest went to the offerer, who could then enjoy a feast with his family and friends. Since the Jews didn’t often slaughter their precious animals for meat, a dinner of beef or lamb would be a special occasion.”*^x
- (Wiersbe) *“In the East, to eat with people is to make them your friends and allies. It means the end of hostilities, as with Jacob and his father-in-law Laban (Gen. 31:54), or the sealing of friendship, as with Israel and Jethro and his people (Ex. 18:12). In the church today, the Lord’s Supper, or Eucharist, is a simple meal that shows the unity of God’s family (1 Cor. 10:16–18; 11:18–34). That’s why it’s called “the Communion.”*
- *The peace offering meal, however, meant more than the enjoyment of good food and fellowship with loved ones. It was also an expression of joyful thanksgiving that the worshiper was at peace with God and in communion with God.”*^x
- The New Testament picture of the peace or fellowship offering is in Romans 5:1 (ESV) **5** Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- We can only have peace with God and with His people through Christ.

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- This may be interesting Hebrew history, but how does it apply to us?
- God takes sin seriously. The elaborate sacrificial system confirms it.
- The first part of Romans 6:23 (ESV) Tells us, “...the wages of sin is death”
- Ezekiel 18:20 (ESV) says, *“The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.”*
- Each of us is held accountable for our sin nature and the sin we commit.
- The good news is in the second part of Romans 6:23 which says, *“...the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*
- We no longer follow the Old Testament system of sacrifices and offerings in order to receive forgiveness of sin. Jesus paid it ALL with His death.
- We no longer need to bring a costly animal and have it burned on an altar. Jesus came as the perfect sacrifice for our sins.
- Because we’re covered in His righteousness, we can place our very selves and lives on the altar as a “living sacrifice” in worship to our holy God. His righteousness allows us to “be holy” as God is holy.
- Even though our sins are covered (atoned for) we still need to offer sacrifices to the Lord in a different way.

1 Samuel 15:22 (ESV)

²² And Samuel said, “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.

- Wiersbe: “*The burnt offering (1:1–17; 6:8–13) was the basic sacrifice that expressed devotion and dedication to the Lord. When we surrender ourselves to the Lord, we put “all on the altar” (1:9) and hold back nothing.*”^{xi}”

Romans 12:1–2 (ESV)

A Living Sacrifice

12 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

- Because of all Jesus has done for us, we should offer our body, our mind, and our will as a living sacrifice to Him. That’s a reasonable act of worship!
- When an Israelite felt their relationship with God needed restoration they would bring a burnt offering to the priest as a pleasing aroma to God.
- Daily we need to bring ourselves as the living sacrifice to Jesus our great High Priest, and through Him we can offer our lives in a way that is a sweet-smelling aroma to the Father.

ⁱ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Le 19:27–28). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

ⁱⁱ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Le 19:19). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

ⁱⁱⁱ Tyndale. Life Application Study Bible NKJV (LASB: Full Size) (Kindle Locations 6702-6706). Tyndale House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

^{iv} <https://www.gotquestions.org/burnt-offering.html>

^v Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Le 1:3). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

^{vi} Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Le 1:9). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

^{vii} Tyndale. Life Application Study Bible NKJV (LASB: Full Size) (Kindle Locations 135181-135185). Tyndale House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

^{viii} Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Holy* (p. 23). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

^{ix} Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Holy* (p. 25). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

^x Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Holy* (p. 25). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

^{xi} Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Holy* (p. 20). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.