

Day 120 - SUNDAY: March 12th

Leviticus 1

Leviticus 1:1-17 NKJV

Now the LORD called to Moses, and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting, saying, "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. '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. 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. And he shall skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces. The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay the wood in order on the fire. 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; 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. 'If his offering is of the flocks—of the sheep or of the goats—as a burnt sacrifice, he shall bring a male without blemish. He shall kill it on the north side of the altar before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar. And he shall cut it into its pieces, with its head and its fat; and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that is on the fire upon the altar; but he shall wash the entrails and the legs with water. Then the priest shall bring it all and burn it on the altar; it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. 'And if the burnt sacrifice of his offering to the LORD is of birds, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves or young pigeons. The priest shall bring it to the altar, wring

off its head, and burn it on the altar; its blood shall be drained out at the side of the altar. And he shall remove its crop with its feathers and cast it beside the altar on the east side, into the place for ashes. Then he shall split it at its wings, but shall not divide it completely; and the priest shall burn it on the altar, on the wood that is on the fire. It is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

Daily Deep Dive:

INTRODUCTION to the Book:

We still start this introduction to Leviticus with the UCG reading plan: “Moses evidently wrote much of Leviticus sometime in the first month [Abib or Nisan on the Hebrew calendar, corresponding to March–April] of the second year of the wandering of Israel (compare Exodus 40:17; Numbers 1:1; Numbers 10:11)—perhaps putting it in its final form shortly before his death nearly 40 years later. The book's Hebrew name, *Wayyiqva*, meaning “And He Called,” is taken from the first words of the book. The Greek title, from the Septuagint, is *Leuitikon*—Latinized in the Vulgate as *Leviticus*—which means “pertaining to Levites.” However, this title is somewhat misleading as the book does not deal with the Levites as a whole but more with the priests, the family of Aaron, a segment of the Levites. (The Levites as a whole are not sanctified until the book of Numbers.) Perhaps more appropriate titles for the

book would be those found for it in the Jewish Talmud —"The Law of the Priests" and "The Law of the Offerings." The Aaronic priesthood was divinely ordained by God as a mediator between Him and the nation of Israel. As this book directed, the priests were to officiate over an elaborate system of sacrifices and rituals. The book of Hebrews tells us that "all this is symbolic, pointing to the present time [of Christ's redemption]. The offerings and sacrifices there prescribed cannot give the worshipper inward perfection. It is only a matter of food and drink and various rites of cleansing—outward ordinances in force until the time of reformation" (9:9–10, New English Bible)—that is, the time of Christ's death and resurrection followed by the giving of the Holy Spirit to the New Testament Church. Nevertheless, the sacrificial system was from God—and served a valuable purpose in that it was part of what was ultimately intended to lead people to Christ (see Galatians 3:24–25). Indeed, there will again be sacrifices after Christ returns (see Ezekiel 46:1–15). Jesus has, of course, become the true sacrifice for all mankind. Thus, there is no need for the sacrifice of animals at this time: "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when He [Jesus]

came into the world, He said: 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, "Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.'" Previously saying, 'Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them' (which are offered according to the law), then He said, 'Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.' He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:4–12).

It should also be noted that the Melchizedek priesthood of Jesus Christ has now taken over from the Aaronic priesthood. Jesus is now the Mediator between God and man (see Hebrews 7–10). And, in fact, *Christians* are now *priests* serving under Him (1 Peter 2:5, 9). Indeed, the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ was not the only thing typified in the various sacrifices of the Old Testament. They

also represented our following Christ's example today, presenting *ourselves* as offerings: "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" (Romans 12:1). Realizing this amazing fact, as *The Nelson Study Bible's* introductory notes on this book explains, "modern Christians can learn much from Leviticus. The holiness of God, the necessity of holy living, the great cost of atonement and forgiveness, the privilege and responsibility of presenting only our best to God, the generosity of God that enables His people to be generous—these are only some of the lessons. Leviticus reveals the holiness of God and His love for His people in ways found nowhere else in the Bible. Ultimately, Leviticus calls God's people of all ages to the great adventure of patterning life after God's holy purposes."

Before looking at each of the five main offerings detailed in the first seven chapters of Leviticus, it is recommended that those wishing to study them in much greater depth read a 19th-century book by author Andrew Jukes titled *The Law of the Offerings*. It is available to order through the Internet or you can probably find it at your local library or Christian bookstore, as it is considered the standard work on this

topic. While we would not agree with Jukes' book in a number of particulars, it is biblically sound in many important respects and offers some incredible insights into the subject. Be warned, however, that because of its older and somewhat elevated style, it does not always make for easy reading." [END]

In Leviticus 19:2 God commands "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God *am* holy." If we had to pick one major theme from this book, it would be "God is Holy". The word "Holy" in Hebrew means "set apart" (BDB) and comes from a root word meaning "to be clean" (Strong) and also "be separate" (BDB). If God is clean, pure, and set apart from mankind, how can we as unclean, impure individuals have a relationship with God? We will learn a lot about this topic as we move throughout the book of Leviticus. God wants a relationship with mankind, but not just in any form or fashion, only in His way, a way that respects His Holiness.

This last Sabbath, I started a new three-part sermon series on the 5 main offerings we are about to cover in the early chapters of Leviticus. Each of these five offerings teaches us about different facets of Jesus Christ as the perfect Offering. We often consider Jesus Christ's sacrifice through

the lens of sin, and certainly, that is a major and central part of the Gospel of Christ (Rom 1:16). However, the offering of Jesus Christ fulfilled more than just the sin offering before God. Jesus Christ fulfilled all five of the offerings we will cover this week. We will see how Jesus Christ not only fulfilled these offerings but also met each facet of them. Finally, we will also come to see that Jesus Christ was the perfect “offerer” (one giving the offering), the perfect “offering” (what was given), and was also the perfect “High Priest”.

Leviticus 1:

Let’s begin with the UCG reading plan on this chapter which provides a general overview of the Burnt Offering: “We often think of Old Testament sacrifices as simply typical of Christ's death. But there is far more to it than that. As Andrew Jukes explains, offerings were "divided into two great and distinctive classes—first, the sweet savour offerings, which were all... oblations for acceptance; and secondly, those offerings which were *not* of a sweet savour, and which were required as an expiation for sin. The first class, comprising the Burnt-offering, the [Grain]-offering, and the Peace-offering—were offered on the [bronze] altar

which stood in the Court of the Tabernacle. The second class—the Sin and Trespass—offerings—were not consumed on the altar: some of them were burnt on the earth without the camp; others the priest ate, having first sprinkled the blood for atonement. In the first class, sin is not seen or thought of: it is the faithful Israelite giving a sweet offering to [the Eternal]. In the Sin—offerings it is just the reverse: it is an offering charged with the sin of the offerer. Thus, in the first class—that is, the Burnt—offering, the [Grain]—offering, and the Peace—offering—the offerer came for acceptance as a worshipper. In the second class, in the Sin and Trespass—offerings, he came as a sinner to pay the penalty of sin and trespass. In either case the offering was without blemish.... But in the [sweet aroma offering], the offerer appears as man in perfectness, and in his offering stands the trial of fire—that is, God's searching holiness; and accepted as a fragrant savour, all ascends a sweet offering to [the Eternal]. In the other, the offerer appears as a sinner, and in his offering bears the penalty due to his offences" (pp. 55–56).

In the case of the burnt offering, we are not "to consider Christ as the Sin—bearer, but as man in perfectness meeting God in holiness. The thought here is not, 'God hath made

Him to be sin for us' [2 Corinthians 5:21], but rather, 'He loved us, and gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour' [Ephesians 5:2]. Jesus... both in the Burnt-offering and Sin-offering, stood as our representative.... We have here what we may in vain search for elsewhere—man giving to God what truly satisfies Him" (pp. 56–57). But it is not only the way that Christ lived His life on earth 2,000 years ago that is pictured here. Rather, Christ lives in us today as the same burnt offering. Thus, we are enabled to present *ourselves* as "living sacrifices" (Romans 12:1)—offering a "sweet smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God" (Philippians 4:18) by giving ourselves wholly to Him (compare 2 Corinthians 8:5). Indeed, the burnt offering was wholly consumed, symbolizing "that the worshiper must hold nothing in reserve when coming to God; everything is consumed in the relationship between God and the sincere worshiper" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on Leviticus 1:3).

Jesus, of course, set the perfect example in this. Jukes explains: "Man's duty to God is not the giving up of one faculty, but the entire surrender of all.... I cannot doubt that the type refers to this in speaking so particularly of the parts of the Burnt-offering; for 'the head,' 'the fat,' 'the

legs,' 'the inwards,' are all distinctly enumerated. 'The head' is the well-known emblem of the thoughts; 'the legs' the emblem of the walk; and 'the inwards' the constant and familiar symbol of the feelings and affections of the heart. The meaning of 'the fat' may not be quite so obvious, though here also Scripture helps us to the solution [Psalms 17:10; 92:14; 119:70; Deuteronomy 32:15]. It represents the energy not of one limb or faculty, but the general health and vigour of the whole. In Jesus these were all surrendered, and all without spot or blemish. Had there been but one affection in the heart of Jesus which was not yielded to His Father's will... then He could not have offered Himself or been accepted as 'a whole burnt-offering to [the Eternal].' But Jesus gave up all: He reserved nothing. All was burnt, all consumed upon the altar" (pp. 63–64). This is the same end to which we strive—through Christ living His life in us today." [END]

Verse 3 – God allows three types of animals to be given as a Burnt offering. A bull (verse 3), a sheep/goat (verse 10), or a turtledove/young pigeon (verse 14). We will cover each of these as we come to them. Here in verse 3, if the burnt offering was a bull, it had to be a male without blemish. As I shared in the introduction, this offering was met perfectly by Jesus Christ, and that is why we are no longer required to give these offerings today in a literal sense. This offering,

like the others we will cover, pointed to the coming of Jesus Christ (the author of Hebrews demonstrates this in Hebrews 9 & 10. It may be a good idea for you to read those two chapters as you consider the book of Leviticus). Why of the herd (bull/ox – Psa 69:31)? We find a number of scriptures that point to the strength of a bull/ox (compare Prov 14:4, Num 23:22, Num 24:8, Psa 22:8). Oxen were known for those tremendous value in labor. Unlike the physical depictions of Jesus Christ as frail and weak, as a carpenter (one who works with wood or stone), Jesus Christ would have been a strong individual capable of lifting and forming large stone pieces. Besides physical strength, Jesus Christ was a man of character, determination, unwavering faithfulness, and of devoted labor. The offering of the herd also had to be a male, which Jesus Christ obviously was. The offering also had to be unblemished. This likewise was met by the perfect sinless life of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:18 & 19 tells us: “knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, 1Pe 1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

Notice also here in verse 3 that this offering was of “free will”. In John 10:17-18 it states: “**“Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”**

Jesus Christ willingly gave His life as the Offering.

Verse 4 – The one giving the offering had to personally place his hands on the head of the animal that’s life would

be given as the offering. This offering required a life to be given wholly and completely to God, and the “offerer” had to personally and intimately understand that this life was being given on their behalf. Jesus Christ met both these roles. He was the one freely giving the offering (John 10:17–18) and also the one who would be the unblemished male offering. This verse also talks about “atonement”. We often think of “atonement” as having to be pertaining to sin. Andrew Jukes in his book “The Law of the Offerings” brings out that the word Atonement means “making satisfaction” and he states: “we may satisfy a loving and holy requirement, or satisfy offended justice. Either would be satisfaction.” In this entire chapter, we don’t see sin mentioned. We will continue to see why as we move through this chapter and dive more deeply into the symbolism.

Verse 5 – The one giving the offering was responsible to take the life. As each Christian grows in understanding that Jesus Christ died for each one of us, we also grow in understanding that we were responsible for His death. We may not have been the ones in the first century to kill Him,

but it was because of us individually and personally, that He had to die, so that we could have a future & a hope.

Throughout the Bible, we see God clearly instruct that we are never to consume the blood of an animal. In Leviticus 17:11 God states “**the life of the flesh is in the blood...**”. We will see this come up time and time again. After the offering’s life was taken, the blood, symbolizing “the life” of the offering, was sprinkled on the altar. This offering pointed again to the sinless life of Jesus Christ, whose life (whose blood) made it possible for something or someone to go from a state of being “unclean/impure” to Holy/Pure/Clean before God. Hebrews 9:13-14 states: “ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

The life (the blood) of the Offering made it possible that unclean/impure could become Clean/Pure.

Verses 6 – 9: Here we find that the offering isn’t just thrown upon the altar and burned completely, but is instead taken apart in the pieces of the head, fat, inwards & legs. God had a reason for these instructions. What does each of the four sections represent? In Mark 12:29-30, Jesus Christ taught “**The first of all the commandments is: 'HEAR, O ISRAEL, THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE.**

Mar 12:30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, WITH ALL

YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' This *is* the first commandment.”

To meet perfectly God’s first and great commandment, one must give their whole life first and foremost to God. Jesus Christ teaches us that this is done through the representation of our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. This includes our emotions, our thoughts, our intellect, our sincerity, our might/strength, our whole everything (everything inside and everything outside, every thought and every action). None of us can do this. We may deeply desire to do so, but we as humans all fail. Yet, Jesus Christ did this perfectly. Jesus Christ never sought His own will, not even for a moment. He wholly, and completely, gave His life to God and met this great commandment and met this offering.

The inwards and legs were washed in water. Throughout God’s Word, we see water as a symbol of the Holy Spirit as it relates to its cleansing properties (compare John 7:37–39, 1 Peter 1:22–23). Adam Clarke says simply “This part of the ceremony was symbolical of the *inward* purity, and the holy *walk*”. Here again, Jesus Christ met this part of the offering as being both inwardly and outwardly pure with

regard to both thought and action, as one completely filled and led by the Holy Spirit.

Finally, notice how this offering is described as smelling to God. The KJV refers to it as a “sweet savour” whereas the NKJV refers to it as a “soothing aroma”. This word in Hebrews is only ever used in its connection to pleasing offerings. The root of this word in Hebrew means “to rest, to settle down” and here in Leviticus 1:9 means to have a soothing, calming, relaxing effect on God. God only uses this “soothing aroma” description to apply to three of the five main types of offerings. It’s used with the Burnt Offering (Leviticus 1), the Grain Offering (Leviticus 2), and the Peace Offering (Leviticus 3), all of which are offered on the bronze altar to God. However, the term “soothing aroma” is never used in regard to the sin offering or the trespass offering as we will see later in the week. This is further proof that this Burnt offering and the “atonement” associated with it, had anything to do with sin.

Christ has already given His life as a pleasing and acceptable Offering to God. As baptized Christians, we also are called to understand that each of us now lives our new

lives as living sacrifices to God that are a “soothing aroma” to Him (see Eph 5:1–2, Rom 12:1).

Verse 10 – Instead of a bull/ox, the offerer could give from the flock (sheep/goat). It still had to be a male without blemish. Throughout the bible we see the symbolism of Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God, our Passover (1 Cor 5:7). Whether a young sheep/goat, the lamb is a symbol of meekness, innocence, and a willingness to follow its master. Further, we see the comparison of a lamb being slaughtered, to the conduct of our Savior in Isaiah 53:7 & Acts 8:32–33.

Verse 11 – I won’t cover again the sprinkling of blood as we discussed above, but I want to include for your consideration the John Gill commentary regarding the “north side of the altar” instruction: “...there was a square place from the wall of the altar northward, to the wall of the court, and it was sixty cubits, and all that was over against the breadth of this, from the wall of the porch to the eastern wall, and it is seventy–six cubits; and this foursquare place is called the "north", for the slaying of the most holy things; so that it seems this being a large place,

was fittest for this purpose. Aben Ezra intimates as if some respect was had to the situation of Mount Zion; his note is, "on the side of the altar northward", i.e. without, and so "the sides of the north", Psa_48:2 for so many mistake who say that the tower of Zion was in the midst of Jerusalem; and with this agrees Mr. Ainsworth's note on Lev_6:25 hereby was figured, that Christ our sin offering should be killed by the priests in Jerusalem, and Mount Sion, which was on "the sides of the north", Psa_48:2 crucified on Mount Calvary, which was on the northwest side of Jerusalem; as by the Jews' tradition, the morning sacrifice was killed at the northwest horn of the altar." [END]

Verse 14 – Instead of being of the herd or flock, now we see a burnt offering taken from either a turtledove or young pigeon. The dove and pigeon belong to the same bird family. It is this word for a young pigeon that is mentioned in Genesis 8 as a “dove” being sent out from the Ark by Noah. Throughout time, the dove has been seen as a symbol of peace. This was also the animal offered of those who were poor. I was not able to find the relative value throughout the Bible of a young bull, versus a lamb, versus

a dove. However, if we used a modern-day difference, my research shows that a young bull on average would cost you or me approximately \$5,700, versus a lamb at approximately \$250, versus a dove at approximately \$50. Most of us could not afford to give a free-will offering of \$5,700, although a select few could. Most could give \$250, but some could not. It's my assumption that virtually everyone could give \$50. God's system of free will offerings wasn't for an exclusive crowd. He was accessible to all who wanted to give. It's interesting to me that our Savior was presented 40 days after His birth by His parents in Luke 2:22-23 with two turtledoves/young pigeons. In Leviticus 12:8, which we will cover in more depth when we get there, most people were to bring a lamb and a turtledove/young pigeon, but the poor could bring two turtledoves/young pigeons. One was used for a burnt offering and one for a sin offering. Our Lord did not come from a wealthy family, He was born to a family with little means. As we will continue to see throughout the book of Leviticus, God's system is beautiful and cares and provides for those who have little.