

Leviticus Chapter 1 Continued

Leviticus 1:4 "And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him."

“Put his hand upon the head”: This symbolic gesture pictured the transfer of the sacrificers sin to the sacrificial animal and was likely done with a prayer of repentance and request for forgiveness (compare Psalm 51:18-19).

“Make atonement” The word means “cover”. The psalmist defines it by saying, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Psalm 32:1). Theologically, the “atonement” of the Old Testament covered sin only temporarily, but it did not eliminate sin or later judgment (Heb. 10:4). The one time sacrifice of Jesus Christ fully atoned for sin, thus satisfying God’s wrath forever and insuring eternal salvation (compare Heb. 9:12; 1 John 2:2). Even to those who put saving faith in God for their redemption before Christ’s death on the cross (compare Rom. 3:25-26; Heb. 9:15).

“For him”: This was a substitutionary sacrifice that prefigured the ultimate substitute, Jesus Christ (compare Isaiah Chapter 53, see note on 2 Cor. 5:21).

When the person making the offering puts his hand on the animal’s head, it is as if he is placing his sin on the animal. This is exactly what happened when Jesus took our sin upon His body on the cross. In both instances, there is a substitute for the real sinner. Atonement is an interesting word. It means (to cover). It also means to cancel. The difference in the animal's blood being shed for the sin of the person and Jesus shedding His blood for our sin, is covered in these meanings. The animal's blood cannot do away with sin; it can only cover sin. The sin is still there, just covered by the blood. There cannot be a clear conscience following. In the case of the blood of Jesus, His blood cancels our sin out. There is no longer any sin and we have a clear conscience toward God.

Hebrews 10:4 "For [it is] not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

Jesus took our sin upon His body on the cross that we might take His righteousness on. The most beautiful statement in verse 4 above is (it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him). Praise God, He accepted the substitute, and there is no need for further sacrifice for our sin. Jesus paid it all.

Leviticus 1:5 "And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that [is by] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."

“He shall kill”: Making vivid and dramatic the consequences of sin, the person offering the sacrifice killed and butchered the animal (compare verse 6).

“Aaron’s sons”: This refers to the immediate descendants of Aaron, i.e., Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar (compare Exodus 28:1). In the beginning, there were 5 priests, including Aaron, who served as the High-Priest.

“Sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar”: The slaying of the animal set forth symbolically the transfer of sin and guilt from the offeror to the sacrifice itself. The animal bore the penalty for sin, for “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). The sacrifices represented the final and efficacious sacrifice of Jesus, shedding His blood to make full and complete atonement for sin (see Psalm. 40:6).

We look at the killing of this animal and realize it was necessary to reconcile the person to God. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin.

Hebrews 9:22 "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

The first step into salvation is repenting of sin. Just inside the door of the tabernacle was the brazen altar. This brazen altar was the altar symbolizing judgement, since it was made of bronze. We must first realize we are guilty of sin and then ask forgiveness for the sin on the way to God. The life is in the blood. This blood must flow to bring us life.

Leviticus 17:11 "For the life of the flesh [is] in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it [is] the blood [that] maketh an atonement for the soul."

1 John 1:7 "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Leviticus 1:6 "And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces."

Flay in the verse above, means to spread out hostilely or to strip. The entire burnt offering symbolized what the Father God does to sin. God the Father cannot look upon sin; His wrath burns it up. This is why at one moment during the crucifixion, Jesus cried out to the Father, “Why hast thou forsaken Me”? At that moment that Jesus symbolically took the sin of the entire world upon His body, the Father turned away. This shows God the Father cannot look upon sin, without totally burning it up. Jesus became the perfect sacrifice for sin at the shedding of His blood. From this day forward there was to never be any more sacrificing in the world. Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient for all time for everyone. I believe this is why God allowed the temple in Jerusalem to be destroyed, to stop the sacrificing of animals. Jesus was flayed for believers.

Leviticus 1:7 "And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire:"

The priests are to put the fire upon the altar, because they offered the sacrifice upon the altar. This applies to the first burnt offering which was offered upon the newly-erected altar, since afterwards the fire was always burning, and was never allowed to go out (Lev. 6:13).

"And lay the wood": No other fuel but wood was allowed for the altar, and no one was allowed to bring it from his own house, but it had to be the wood of the congregation (compare Neh. 10:34; 13:31). It had to be of the best kind; worm-eaten wood or timber from pulled-down buildings was not allowed.

Not even the high priest would eat of the meat of this offering. This animal was to be totally consumed by the fire.

Leviticus 1:8 "And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that [is] on the fire which [is] upon the altar:"

"The fire which is upon the altar": Fire usually indicates wrath, judgment, and punishment. The fire here suggests the consuming wrath of God that comes upon the animal and not the offeror. That the bullock was totally consumed teaches that Christ's sacrifice completely satisfied the demands of divine justice.

Again, here, we see that even the meat must be placed exactly in order. The fat was for a sweet smelling savor to the Lord.

Leviticus 1:9 "But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, [to be] a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the LORD."

"Wash": This allowed the one sacrificing to cleanse the animal of excrement and thus make it clean.

"A sweet savor": The pleasant smell of burning meat signified the sacrifice of obedience which was pleasing to the Lord. While the costly ritual recognized God's anger for sin committed (compare 1:13, 17), the penitent heart behind the sacrifice made it acceptable. That was far more significant than the sacrifice itself (compare Gen. 8:21; 1 Sam. 15:23). This is the first of 3 freewill offerings to please the Lord. Compare the grain offering (2:2) and the peace offering (3:5).

This indicated God's satisfaction with the offerings and the propitiation for sin that He accepted, thus satisfying and placating the righteous judgment and wrath of God. They pointed typically to the redemptive work of Christ, whose personal sacrifice to the Father was a "sweet aroma" that satisfied the righteous judgment of God upon sin.

This washing just shows that God will not accept an unclean offering. Ministers today could take a lesson from this. Of course, this entire offering symbolizes Christ's sacrifice for us.

Leviticus 1:10 "And if his offering [be] of the flocks, [namely], of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt sacrifice; he shall bring it a male without blemish."

“Sheep, or of the goats ... a male without blemish”: A sheep or lamb without blemish typified the perfection and submission without objection that our Lord manifested, as He was “brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and ... openeth not his mouth” (Isa. 53:7).

The importance of this being a male, is because it symbolized the offering Jesus made, and Jesus was of male gender in His flesh on the earth. The lamb must be a male, young enough not to have been with a female. It was to be without blemish. The very reason that Jesus' legs were not broken on the cross was to fulfill the Scripture of having no broken bones.

John 19:36 "For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken."

Another Scripture shows the necessity of not breaking a bone of the offering.

Numbers 9:12 "They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it."

This offering was to be burned completely up. No one was to eat any of it. God the Father cannot look upon sin; He will burn it up. This is the symbolism seen here. The burnt sacrifice was sacrificed right inside the door of the outer court of the tabernacle. The way to God is indicated by doing this. The first step a person must make on the way to God, is realize they are a sinner, and repent. When we do this, the next step is to transfer our sin over to Jesus, by accepting Him as our perfect sacrifice. It is no longer necessary to pay for our sin with our own blood. He (Jesus), shed His blood for us. He became our substitute when He took our sin upon His body on the cross and we took on His righteousness on our body. The penalty for sin is death; praise God! Jesus' body died that we might live.

Leviticus 1:11 "And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar."

This and other kinds of sacrifices were killed "on the side of the altar northward" (Lev. 6:25 7:2). Because here seems to have been the largest and most convenient place for that work, the altar being probably near the middle of the east end of the building, and the entrance being on the south side. So the north side was the only vacant place. Besides, this might design the place of Christ's death, both more generally, to wit, in Jerusalem, which was:

"On the side of the altar northward" (Psalm 48:2). And more specially, to wit, on Mount Calvary, which was on the north and west side of Jerusalem.

We must remember from our Exodus teaching, that the priests symbolize those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. The high priest symbolized the pastor of the church. We also see in this above a type and shadow that we can apply to our present day church. The sinner brings the animal to the outer court and places his hand upon the animal's head. He symbolically transfers his sins to the animal in so doing. This is the very thing we have done when we receive Jesus as our perfect sacrifice; we have transferred our sin to Him, as we said before. In this Scripture above, it shows that usually the first dealing with a sinner is not done by

the pastor of the church, but by someone who is a believer in Jesus; a Christian. This altar here that is spoken of, is not in the Holy of Holies, it is in the outer court. It is the bronze altar. Bronze means judgement. The way to God, as we said before, is through repentance. This altar comes before baptism. Aaron's sons ministered in the outer court. They put the blood on this altar of judgement, and the blood of the animal makes the person acceptable to God. Lay Christians bring prospects for the Christian faith to the church and then the minister preaches salvation to them. The sheep (believers in Christ), produce sheep. The pastor (shepherd), leads, guides, and feeds them after they come.

In this lesson, we have repeated ourselves quite a bit, but we must thoroughly understand these symbols before we go on. One of the most important lessons that we are to see in this, is that God Himself set up these sacrifices. This was being the way for sinful man to approach the Holy God. In the garden of Eden, after the sin of Adam and Eve, God sacrificed an animal and made garments for them out of the hide. In the burnt offering above, the only thing that was not completely burned up was the hide of the animal, which was given to the priest. Cain and Abel were a very good example that to be able to approach God, blood must be shed. Cain's offering was unacceptable, because no blood was shed. I could go on and on, but I am sure you see the significance of the shedding of blood. Please keep in mind the types and shadows as we see Jesus in all the sacrifices and offerings. The person killing this sacrifice was admitting his sin.

Leviticus Chapter 1 Continued Questions

1. Who was to kill the offering for the burnt offering?
2. Where did he place his hand before he killed the animal?
3. What did this symbolize?
4. How does this resemble what Jesus did for us on the cross?
5. What 2 meanings does atonement have?
6. What difference is there between, what Jesus did for us when He shed His blood for us, and the blood shed of the animal?
7. What does Hebrews chapter 10 verse 4 tell us about animal's blood?
8. What does the author believe is the most beautiful statement in Leviticus 1:4?
9. Who sprinkles the blood on the altar in verse 5?
10. Where is the altar located that the burnt offering is made on?
11. Why was it necessary to kill the animal?
12. Without the _____ of _____ there is no remission of sin.

13. What is the first step we must take for salvation?
14. What did the brazen altar symbolize?
15. The life of the flesh is in the _____.
16. In 1 John 1:7, we read that what cleanseth us from all unrighteousness?
17. What does the word flay mean in this lesson today?
18. God the Father cannot look upon sin, He will _____ _ _ _ _.
19. Why did Jesus cry out from the cross “Why hast thou forsaken me?”
20. Why does the author believe God allowed the temple in Jerusalem to be destroyed?
21. Who was to put the fire upon the altar?
22. What was the fat of the animal to the Lord?
23. What does the washing of the legs and inward parts of the animal teach us about our offerings today?
24. Why is it important for this animal to be a male?
25. What is the penalty for sin?
26. Who are the priests symbolic of?
27. Who is usually the first contact with a sinner?
28. If the sinner is brought to the church by the believers, what is the job of the pastor?
29. Who set up sacrifices?
30. What were their purpose?
31. Give the first example in the Bible of animal sacrifice?
32. What is the only thing the high priest keeps of the burnt offering?