

LEVITICUS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Leviticus chapter 1 as we continue our study through the Word of God. I do realize that this is a difficult book for some of you; probably most of you and maybe you have never read it before. But let me say this, as difficult as it may be to read, not really one of those devotional books of the Bible, it is so important for us to understand it. And folks, the Holy Spirit did not put this in the Bible as a filler!

First of all, as Andrew Bonar reminds us, “There is no book in the whole compass of that inspired Volume which the Holy Ghost has given us, that contains more of the very words of God than Leviticus. It is God that is the direct speaker on almost every page; His gracious words are recorded in the form wherein they were uttered. This consideration cannot fail to send us to the study of it with singular interest and attention.”

Not only that but did you realize that the book of Leviticus is the first book studied by a Jewish child, and yet for the Christian it is the last if it is read at all. I wonder how many churches have taught on the book of Leviticus verse-by-verse? I would have to guess that very few and that is not right.

Do you know what the theme of the book of Leviticus is? It is holiness, that the children of Israel were to walk in holiness before the Lord, as He is a holy God! In fact, the word “**holy**” is used some 95 times in this book and the word “**atonement**” is used some 51 times. I know, this is the Old Testament and we are living in the New Testament with grace and mercy! Really, they did not see the grace and mercy of God in the Old Testament? Of course they did and if you look at the New Testament, listen to what Peter tells us in I Peter 1:13-16, “**Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’**”

Okay, that may be true, but the book of Leviticus is a bloody book. All the sacrifices that were made, the shed blood of the innocent animal for guilty man! Isn't that what the New Testament is all about? Of course it is! It is all about the blood! It is all about the shed blood of Christ on the cross of Calvary to make atonement for our sins so that we can fellowship with God for sin has separated man from God!

William MacDonald wrote the following regarding this issue of holiness:

J. N. Darby once warned of the dire results if believers grow bored with holiness. Holiness is the main theme of Leviticus, and this book certainly is the hardest one for many Christians to read. Of course, if the instructions are merely taken as details and laws to maintain holiness in everyday life and separation from pagan peoples, the blessing will be limited. Once you see, however, that every detail of the sacrifices pictures the perfection of Christ's person and work, there is much to meditate upon. Further blessing comes from correlating Leviticus with its NT counterpart, The Epistle to the Hebrews."

- William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary, p. 135

So as we go through this book I hope you keep this in mind, the holiness of God and what He desires of us, to walk in holiness, not for salvation but for fellowship!

The Hebrew Bible calls this book from the first word, and in Hebrew it is WAYIQRAA or in our Bibles, "**And He called.**" We get the name, "Leviticus" from the Septuagint writers who called it LEUITIKON in the Greek or Leviticus because it pertains to the priestly ceremonies and instructions. Also, the liberal theologians doubt that Moses wrote this book, they even give a latter date to this book, but in Matthew 8:4 we are told, "**And Jesus said to him, 'See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'**" Jesus is getting this from Leviticus 14:1-32 and you can also see this again in Mark 1:44. So with that as our background, let's begin reading in Leviticus chapter 1, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study His Word!

LEVITICUS

VERSES 1-2

1. Leviticus picks up where the book of Exodus left off, with the establishment of the tabernacle and the Law of God. We are 1 year out from the Exodus in Egypt and the Lord is going to instruct Moses on the sacrifices that were to be made.

VERSES 3-9

1. The first offering is called the burnt offering and it speaks of consecration before the Lord. Just as the sacrifice was totally consumed in the fire before the Lord and it was well pleasing to Him, our lives need to be laid upon the altar of sacrifice, totally given over to Him and as we do, it too is well pleasing to Him. Paul put it like this in Romans 12:1-2, **“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. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”** And keep in mind that this was a free will offering. They were not forced to do this just as we are not forced to consecrate our lives before the Lord. We do it willingly, out of love for Him and God will accept it then and only then, as it is done with a right heart, right motives!

2. Here we see the word “**atonement**” used or the Hebrew word, KOPHAR, and it is used some 50 times in Leviticus as I have already said, and maybe another 50 times in the rest of the Old Testament! Now, the idea behind this word is to cover the person’s sin by the shed blood of the innocent animal that was without spot or blemish. Now some people and some commentators feel that this word means, “to take away,” but I disagree. First of all, in Genesis 6:14 we are told, “**Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.**” The Lord told Noah to “**cover**” the ark and He uses the word KOPHAR. Thus, God is not instructing Noah to take it away but to cover the ark with pitch.

Also, in Hebrews 9:11-14 Paul tells us, “**But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 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?**” In the Old Testament sin was only covered up until Jesus came and took our sins away, casting them as far as the east is from the west, to be remembered no more!

In the New Testament it is the Greek word KATALLAGE that is used for **“atonement”** or **“reconciliation.”** We see Paul speak of this in Romans 5:11 where he tells us, **“And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”** The word **“reconciliation”** is KATALLAGE or it means to reconcile! We see the same thing in II Corinthians 5:18-19, **“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”** You see, our sins are no longer covered up by the various animal sacrifices; they are totally taken away in Christ!

3. Also, the one who brought the burnt offering and laid his hands on the head of this bull was the one who actually killed the animal. The idea is this. Someone else can't consecrate their life for you, you must do it freely!

4. We also see here a picture of Christ who freely gave His life for us, dedicated Himself to the work of the Father. When Mary and Joseph lost Jesus in Jerusalem they finally caught up with Him in the temple, and we are told in Luke 2:49, “**And He said to them, ‘Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?’**” Also, in John 6:38 Jesus said, “**For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.**” And at the end of the ministry of Jesus He said in John 17:4-5, “**I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.**” That is what the Lord desires of us. Lives that are totally consecrated to Him as this burnt offering pictured for us! Have you consecrated your life to Him?

VERSES 10-13

1. If you could not afford a bull then you could offer a sheep or goat to the Lord as a burnt offering. The idea here is that it was a matter of the heart and you gave as you could to the Lord, none were left out!

VERSES 14-17

1. And, if you could not afford to give from your livestock or herd, then you can offer a bird; turtledoves or a young pigeon. Again, if the sacrifice was made with the right heart before God, it would be accepted no matter if you offered a bull, a sheep, a goat or a bird! But if it was with the wrong heart, then no sacrifice would be accepted by the Lord. Now, in saying that, it would also be wrong to give less than you could afford as an offering. Think about it. When God became flesh and dwelt among us to offer a payment for sin, He gave that which was most costly – **HIMSELF!** As you place your life on the altar of sacrifice, are you giving your all to the Lord?

LEVITICUS 2VERSES 1-3

1. The second offering is called the meal or grain offering and it speaks of the consecration of service and part of this offering was given to the Lord and part of it was given to the priests.

VERSES 4-10

1. This grain offering could be baked in the oven or baked in a pan or even baked in a covered pan but keep in mind God is instructing them how to do it, they could not bring the grain offering any way that they wanted just as we can't serve the Lord any way we want. We must follow His will in our service to Him!

VERSE 11

1. In this offering no leaven is used because leaven is a type of sin in the Scriptures. You see, leaven works by the organisms in the yeast releasing carbon dioxide and a little leaven can infect the whole lump! The same is true with sin; just a little sin will infect our whole life as Paul said in I Corinthians 5:6-8, **“Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”** Thus, don’t let sin infect your service for the Lord, for it will make your service sour!

2. Also, honey was not to be placed in this offering because honey is a sweetener and God does not want us to artificially sweeten our service for Him, He will take care of that Himself!

VERSE 12

1. The offering of firstfruits were not be offered like the grain offerings. The firstfruits will be covered in the last few verses of this chapter and again, they are different than the grain offerings.

VERSE 13

1. Why did God say that salt was needed for this offering? Because salt speaks of purity, preservation and thus, our service should be pure before the Lord and it should help preserve goodness, stop the decay of this world.

VERSES 14-16

1. The firstfruits of the harvest belonged to the Lord and yet, they may have been inclined to keep them for themselves. What if the rest of the harvest would fail, they would have nothing! Here's the thing. If God required this of them, then He would honor His promise and He would provide for them if they gave to Him their firstfruits. Solomon reminds us in Proverbs 3:9-10, "**Honor the Lord with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.**" God will bless as we freely give to Him, may we not forget that!

2. Oil is also important because it speaks of the Holy Spirit. You see, apart from the Holy Spirit empowering us for service, our efforts are futile; they will never achieve what God intended! Thus, are you willing to give your life in the service of the Lord?

LEVITICUS 3

VERSES 1-5

1. The third offering is called the peace offering and it was not instituted to make peace with God because that is found in the sin offering found in Leviticus chapter 4. This peace offering was established so we can enjoy peace with God and that is the reason Jesus came, to restore that fellowship that was broken with God as sin entered the world through Adam in the Garden of Eden. Peter put it like this in I Peter 3:18, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”** You see, He came to bring us to the Father because our sins have separated us from God. And it is as Paul said in Ephesians 2:14, **“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation.”** He truly is our peace!

2. In this offering part was given to the Lord and then there is no mention of what happens with the meat portions of this animal. That is because the meat portion was to be given to the priest and some to the one who brought the sacrifice as they fellowshiped together with God in partaking of this meal. Thus, this was a peace offering or a fellowship offering as you sat down with the Lord and ate with Him in a sense! Yes, peace with God is made through the sacrifice of Jesus and because of what He has done we can have this fellowship with God!

VERSES 6-11

1. If you could not afford a male or female bull, then you could offer a sheep instead.

God did not want people left out of fellowship with Him! And once again the blood and fat were given to the Lord while the meat portion was given to the priest and the one who brought the sacrifice.

VERSES 12-16

1. Again, if you could not afford a sheep, then you could offer a goat!

VERSE 17

1. In other words, the fat and the blood belong to the Lord. Now, what does that mean to me today? I believe we can enjoy peace with God by giving to Him our best or the fat you might say. We can also enjoy peace with God by giving to him our lives or the blood you might say. Are you enjoying peace with God?

2. These first three sacrifices were sweet smelling sacrifices before the Lord and they were not mandatory or required but they were free will offerings or as the person purposed in his heart to give to the Lord. But don't miss out on what is being taught. You don't have to consecrate your life to the Lord, you don't have to dedicate your service to the Lord, you don't have to have fellowship with Him, but if you don't, you do miss out on the blessings! As we move into chapters 4 and 5 of Leviticus we will see the sin offering and the trespass offering, and these are mandatory offerings, and they are not sweet smelling before the Lord!

LEVITICUS 4

VERSES 1-2

1. The fourth offering was the sin offering and it is a picture of Christ shedding His blood for us. The word “sin” carries with it the idea of missing the mark and that mark is perfection. Thus, you can try to do good, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak you might say, and you sin. If you committed that sin, then an offering was needed to atone and if you think about it, there are not enough animals to cover all of our sins. But, there is the perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ who came and took away our sins by nailing them to the cross of Calvary, paying our debt of sin as He became sin for us so that we can become the righteousness of God in Him! And this was not a sweet smelling sacrifice to God for sin is not nor is it ever sweet before the Lord!

VERSES 3-12

1. For a priest who sinned, he needed to offer a bull before the Lord. The fatty portions of this animal were given to the Lord and the rest was to be taken outside the camp and burned. Why is that? First of all Jesus was crucified on Calvary, which was outside the city of Jerusalem and secondly, this sacrifice was not to be given to God so you can have a steak dinner or a leather jacket! All the selfish motives needed to be removed. Thus, the good meat and leather as well as the worthless portions were burned outside the camp!

2. Also, the blood was to be sprinkled seven times in front of the veil that separated the holy place from the holy of holies. You see, without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin and to come before a holy God, the blood needed to be shed! Also, the blood was to be placed on the altar of incense that was a picture of our prayers ascending before the Lord. The idea here is that unless the blood has been applied, our prayers will not ascend before the Lord, they will not be heard, or more accurately, answered. And lastly, the blood was to be placed on the brazen altar because that was the place for atonement!

VERSES 13-21

1. So if the nation of Israel sins unintentionally they too would offer a bull as the priest were to do but this time seven elders representing the nation of Israel would lay their hands on this sacrifice, on this animal and as they did, the sins of the nation were placed on this animal and the sacrifice was made.

VERSES 22-26

1. If a ruler of the nation sinned he was to bring a male goat and the blood of this animal was to be placed on the brazen altar. Also, according to Leviticus 6:24-30, the rest of the animal that was sacrificed was available for the priest to eat while the fat was given to the Lord.

VERSES 27-35

1. Now, lastly, if a common person sinned they were to bring a female goat to the Lord or a lamb and it would seem once again that the priest would partake of this meat while the fat was given to the Lord.

LEVITICUS 5VERSE 1

1. In this section we are dealing with the trespass offering or things that a person has done against another. The idea here in this verse is that you are not telling the truth even though you have sworn to tell the truth. It is like our court system as you are sworn in and you say, "I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help me God!" Thus, we are to be honest when we speak and we are also to tell the truth in our witnessing of Jesus!

VERSES 2-3

1. This is speaking of being ceremonially unclean as you touched the carcass of a dead animal or person and the remedy for this was the trespass offering.

VERSE 4

1. If we make a promise to someone to do something for them, we are to keep it, we are to do it. We are not to make excuses for not doing it, a promise is a promise before God! For Israel, a trespass offering was to be made and for us, repenting and yes we are covered by the blood of Jesus, but don't use that as your excuse, fulfill your promise that you made!

VERSES 5-13

1. You are guilty the moment you sin but you don't know you need to get right until you realize that you have sinned. It is as David said in Psalm 119:9-11, "**How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.**" God's Word that is opened up to us by His Spirit shows us our sin! And this cleansing was available to all, the rich and the poor! You could offer a sheep, or a goat, or two birds or even fine flour. But the key was not only this ritual for apart from the confession of sin, apart from repentance, the ritual is meaningless, it will do nothing for you!

VERSES 14-16

1. Here we see some kind of desecration of the holy things of God, the things of the tabernacle and not just a trespass offering was needed here, but they needed to make restitution for what they did plus 20 percent!

VERSES 17-19

1. If you did desecrate the holy things of God and yet you had an excuse, “I didn’t know they were the holy things of God” that was not an acceptable excuse before the Lord.

You still had to make a sacrifice to atone for your sin. Ignorance is never an excuse!

2. As we close this evening, here is the glorious truth. God has made a way for the rich and the poor, the king and the common person to come to Him. You see, every human being has access to God and that way is open for all to enter but it is only through Jesus Christ! Paul said in Romans 10:13, **“For ‘whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’”** And Peter tells us in Acts 4:12, **“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”**

And we are told in John 14:6, **“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”** God has provided a way for every person to come to Him and that is through His Son Jesus Christ. It is as Jesus said in Revelation 3:20, **“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”**

Won’t you open up your heart and let Him in? You see, do you want to try and come with all those sacrifices every time you sin? You won’t make it! How much better it is to come to the Lamb of God who has taken away the sins of the world, ***JESUS CHRIST!***