

Synoptic view of the Offerings

What the offerings of Leviticus 1-5 mean to Christians

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Bible reading

Principle reading

Leviticus chapters one through to five.

Other readings

Exodus 24 and others

Numbers 18 and others

Background

This is merely an outline of the six most important offerings made in the Old Testament. Forgotten by most bible teachers, the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament, and gives depth to the understanding of what Christ accomplished on the cross. Those who do without the Old Testament view Scriptures in two dimensions. The Old Testament adds depth - a 3rd dimension if you will - to the New Testament. Indeed it is the Old Testament that Jesus quotes to illustrate his teachings adding depth to the conversations he had on the precepts of God.

The Law teaches us about the character of God, the glory which God accomplished at Calvary, His attitude towards sin and the nature of His holiness, amongst many other factors. However, importantly they pointed to the work of Jesus Christ and especially his work on the cross. Those who don't know why or how Christ bore the sins of many (Hebrews 9:28) need to start at the Law of Moses, for it is the sacrifices that teach us the elements of the Lord Jesus Christ's sacrifice.

There are many definitive studies on this topic, but one cannot go past the work of C.H. Mackintosh (see [Resources](#) for his works) whom I quote below. His work can be verbose and quite overwhelming but unlike other commentaries he weaves the aspects of the Law into what our daily lives need to resemble, as Christians.

The order in which these offerings appear in Leviticus is very important and cannot be over estimated. They appear in order from chapter 1 to chapter 4 of Leviticus. C. H. Mackintosh writes on this topic thus (*Notes on the Pentateuch: Leviticus*):

*"And, now, one word, as to the order of the offerings, in the opening chapters of the Book of Leviticus. The Lord begins with the **burnt offering**, and ends with the **trespass offering**. That is to say, He leaves off where we begin. This order is marked and most instructive. When, first, the arrow of conviction enters the soul, there are deep searchings of conscience, in reference to sins actually committed. Memory casts back its enlightened eye over the page of one's past life, and sees it stained with numberless trespasses against God and man. At this point of the soul's history, it is not so occupied with the question of the root from whence those trespasses have sprung, as with the stern and palpable fact that such and such things have actually been committed; and, hence, it needs to know that God has provided a sacrifice through which "all trespasses" can be "frankly forgiven." This is presented to us in the **trespass offering**. But, as one advances, in the divine life, he becomes conscious that those sins which he has committed are but branches from a root, streams from a fountain; and, moreover, that sin in his nature is that fountain – that root. This leads to far deeper exercise, which can only be met by a deeper insight into the work of the cross. In a word, the cross will need to be apprehended by that in which God Himself has "condemned sin in the flesh," (Rom. 8: 3) My reader will observe, it does not say, "sins in the flesh," but the root from whence these have sprung, namely, "sin in the flesh." this is a truth of immense importance. Christ not merely "died for our sins, according to the scriptures," but He was "made sin for us." (2 Cor. 5: 21) This is the doctrine of the **sin offering**.*

*Now, it is when the heart and conscience are set at rest, through the knowledge of Christ's work, that we can feed upon Himself as the ground of our peace and joy, in the presence of God. There can be no such thing known as peace or joy, until we see all our trespasses forgiven and our sin judged. The trespass offering and the sin offering must be known, ere the **Peace offering**, joy offering, or thanksgiving offering can be appreciated. Hence, therefore, the order in which the peace offering stands, corresponds with the order of our spiritual apprehension of Christ.*

*The same perfect order is observable in reference to the **meat offering**. When the soul is led to taste the sweetness of spiritual communion with Christ – to feed upon Him, in peace and thankfulness, in the divine presence, it is drawn out in earnest desire to know*

more of the wondrous mysteries of His Person; and this desire is most blessedly met in the meat offering, which is the type of Christ's perfect manhood.

Then, in the **burnt offering**, we are conducted to a point beyond which it is impossible to go, and that is, the work of the cross, as accomplished under the immediate eye of God, and as the expression of the unswerving devotion of the heart of Christ. All these things will come before us, in beautiful detail, as we pass along; we are here only looking at the order of the offerings, which is truly marvellous, whichever way we travel, whether outward from God to us, or inward from us to God. In either case, we begin with the cross and end with the cross. If we begin with the burnt offering, we see Christ, on the cross, doing the will of God – making atonement, according to the measure of His perfect surrender of Himself to God. If we begin with the trespass offering, we see Christ, on the cross, bearing our sins, and putting them away, according to the perfection of His atoning sacrifice; while, in each and all, we behold the excellency, the beauty, and the perfection of His divine and adorable Person. Surely, all this is sufficient to awaken in our hearts the deepest interest in the study of those precious types which we shall now proceed to consider in detail. And may God the Holy Ghost, who penned the Book of Leviticus, expound its contents in living power to our hearts; that so, when we have reached the close, we may have abundant cause to bless His name for many thrilling and soul-stirring views of the Person and work of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory, now, henceforth, and for evermore. Amen.”

1. The Burnt Offering

Rank

The burnt offering was the highest in character and the first in the order of the sacrifices. The Christian first knows Christ as the *trespass offering* because this is what our guilt highlights to us. However, the *burnt offering* lifts us to heaven where we can worship and adore him who satisfied the Father because he was obedient, even unto death. This is because *atonement* is made with the burnt offering unlike the other offerings. However, unlike the sin offering, this offering is for the acceptance of the person, not merely to secure forgiveness. It is glorious as it points to the voluntary nature of the offering made by Christ, who accomplished in death the divine will: “Lo I come to do thy will of God” (Hebrews 10:7).

Antitype in Jesus

Jesus in death presenting Himself in order to accomplish the will and glory of God. It is a “sweet savour”: “Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, even as the Christ loved us, and delivered himself up for us, an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour” Ephesians 5:1 - 2 (DNT). Hence we see Christ coming up

to the cross (the only place this could be expiated¹) of his own free will and in the place of sin, offering himself to accomplish the will and glory of God in death.

Direction

This offering is God-ward (God-facing) aspect of the cross of Christ as described in Hebrews 9:14)

Bible

Leviticus 1; 4:9-13

Numbers 14:3-12

2 Chronicles 7:1-7

The Offering

An unblemished animal depending upon the affluence of the giver; any of the herd, flock or bird including bullock, goat, sheep, ram, lamb, turtle dove or young pigeon.

Trumpets were blown over the burnt offering on special occasions, as a memorial before God, as described in Numbers 10:10.

Role of the offerer

The offerer is prominent in that *he* offers the animal, lays his hand upon its head, kills it, flays it, cuts it into pieces, and washes the internal organs and legs in water. The only exception was for a bird, when the priest killed it, but this was an exception since it was not in the ordinary course of the priest's work, perhaps for practical reasons, since birds were offered by the frailest and poorest of Israel.

The blood

The blood was sprinkled by the priests.

The Flesh

The flesh was arranged on the alter by the priests and burnt. (Note that the burnt offering fire on the alter was not allowed to go out Lev 6:13 - the state of man is such that the offering needs to be continuous).

¹ To make amends or atone for.

Accompanying offerings

On entrance of Israel in the land, no burnt offering was complete without an accompanying grain (meat) offering signifying God has the death and life of His Son before Him.

The drink offering was offered as well with morning and evening burnt sacrifices.

2. The Grain (meat)² Offering

Rank

Accompanied the *burnt offering* and is of the “sweet savour” class of offering, most holy.

Antitype in Jesus

Jesus as man presenting to God an unblemished life, with all its grace and moral perfectness: “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners”. It sets forth the holy humanity of our Lord, “most holy”.

The fine flour (“humanity in perfection”) mingled with oil (“Holy Spirit”) poured (denoting the anointing of Christ by the Holy Spirit) sets forth the truth of the Divine conception of the human nature of our Lord as told in Matthew 1:10, while the flour anointed with the oil signifies the weighty truth expressed in Acts 10:38. Frankincense indicates the “moral graces”, and salt “in-corruption”; leaven, of course, was forbidden, as was honey which denotes “human effort”. Part of the offering was burned with the unburned portion going to the priests.

Which way this offering faced

Godward expressing the offering of an unblemished life to God in death.

Bible

Leviticus 2

Numbers 15:4-9

Exodus 24:40-42

The Offering

“Fine flour” or “green ears of corn” with frankincense, oil and salt. The salt could not be omitted and honey was forbidden.

² The actual word had the meaning of “food”, in this case grain, but also may mean gift or offering.

Role of the offerer

The offering was based upon and its value declared by that which God found in the burnt offering. God's part was a handful of the flour with the oil, and all frankincense.

The blood

A blood-less offering, but always accompanied the burnt offering which shed blood.

The grain

A portion was to be taken and burnt by fire - none was to remain - the rest was eaten by the priests (Lev 6:16).

Accompanying offerings

The burnt offering.

3. The Peace Offering

Rank

Its worth was derived from the moral value expressed in the burnt offering, that is, what God found in the blessed and voluntary surrender of Jesus to accomplish the will of God: it being communion.

Antitype in Jesus

Christ slain on the cross: forms the thought of all communion.

Which way this offering faced

Godward, in that this sacrifice came after the burnt and grain offerings. Our communion with God is based only on the work of Christ, both on the character of Christ presented to God and what God has already accepted. Without acceptance, we would still be utterly lost.

Bible

Leviticus 3, 7:11-21

Numbers 18:17, 19

The Offering

Of the herd (male or female), of the flock (male or female) being bullocks, lambs or goats. The various parts were either burnt or eaten (see below). That burnt was laid on the alter of burnt offering.

Trumpets were blown over the burnt offering on special occasions, as a memorial before God, as described in Numbers 10:10.

Role of the offerer

Priests carried out this duty.

The blood

Blood to be sprinkled around the altar.

The flesh

Fat and internal organs burn on the alter as a sweet savour.

Breast (love) and other parts eaten by the priests.

Shoulders (strength) “heaved” before the Lord and eaten by the officiating priest³.

The remainder was burnt on the **third day** as communion with God required this sacrifice.

Accompanying offerings

The burnt offering.

4. The Sin Offering

Rank

Most holy

³ תְּרוּמָה: The KJV uses the term “heave” offering (Lev 7:14) which is not a term used in this context today. The NSAB and NIV use “contribution to the Lord”. It has the sense of “offer” or “take possession of”. It could also mean gift, but probably better gives the intent of “raising up” or “removing” a portion for the Lord - leaving the rest for the priest to consume. *The Chumash* (Mesorah Publications, edited by Rabbi Nosson Scherman) translates Lev 7:14 as “From it he shall offer one from each kind of *offering a portion* to Hashem [The Name i.e. Jehovah]; it shall belong to the Kohen [i.e. priest] who throws the blood of the peace-offering”. Its precedence is less than the wave offering which is also raised up.

The judgement of God borne and sin condemned in the holy sacrifice of Christ. Its character comes from the fact this offering, unlike the burnt offering, was not burn on the altar but wholly consumed “outside the camp”. It indicates God’s attitude toward sin.

Antitype in Jesus

Jesus on the cross made sin for us, who suffered, “without the gate” - i.e. outside the city of Jerusalem. This point is important, as it expresses the true nature of sin and its relevance to the cry “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”, and God’s abhorrence of sin contrasted with His holiness. It represents Jesus made sin for us; “Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us, that we might become God’s righteousness in him” 2 Corinthians 5:21 (DNT).

The offerer

The offering varied according to the position of the offender. Sin is measured by the character of God, and the responsibility of the person by the position he was divinely set in. The value of the animal and the application of its blood are important points in the sin offering. Sins of ignorance were not passed over, but could be met by sacrifice. This offering, however, could not take away the guilt of the sin (see Hebrews 9:9, 10:2). In each case the hand is placed on the animal to which the sin was transferred. The animal then was sacrificed. This dealt with the sin - the trespass offering is required to deal with the sinner. The poorest could offer this offering and could offer a pair of birds or even the tenth part of an ephah of flour.

Bible

Leviticus 4, 5:1-13, 6:24-30, 10:16-20.

The Offering

Of the herd (male or female), of the flock (male or female) or of birds, and in a specific case, of an ephah of fine flour, but usually the goat as found in the Day of Atonement.

Role of the offerer

An anointed priest carried out this duty, but had to deal with his own sins first. The High Priest carried out the ordinance on the Day of Atonement.

If all of Israel had sinned un-intentionally (Lev 4:13) the elders laid their hands on the head of a bull which was killed before the Lord.

A king who had sinned un-intentionally (Lev 4:22) laid his hand on a goat transferring the sin to the goat, he then killed it. The ordinary person also killed the offering (Lev 4:29) at the place of the burnt offering.

The priests carried out the rest of the sacrifice in each case.

The blood

Sprinkled seven times before the Lord, that is in front of the veil over the most holies.

The flesh

The fat (excellency) ALONE was burnt as a sweet savour to God.

Accompanying offerings

None given.

5. The Trespass Offering

Rank

Most holy

Note that trespass are acts done against God or man. The sin offering deals with sin, whereas the trespass offering deals with the transgressor - you and I. We note here that all transgression is sin, but not all sin has the character of transgression. Therefore, in the sin offering, there is the laying on of hands on the head of the victim, and we see the condemnation of sin, whereas in the trespass offering the confession of sin is necessary. We also see restitution being needed.

Antitype in Jesus

Christ's sacrifice meets the requirements of sins and transgressions against God, with full restitution.

The offerer

This offering was not about what I am but about the consequences of the sin "what I have done" highlighting the guilt and injury done. Restitution, compensation and confession accompanied this offering.

Bible

Leviticus 5:14-19, 6:1-7, 7:1-7

Numbers 28:9,10

The Offering

Rams and lambs.

This offering dealt with consequences of sin, placing the guilt and injury done in full view: hence having injured another, it can only be met by sacrifice and the injury repaired by full and righteous restitution. Similar to the sin offering but there was no laying on of hands on the victims head as in the sin offering.

This offering required the confession of the offerer (Lev 5:5).

Role of the offerer

Restore or compensate along with confession

The blood

Blood sprinkled on the side of the alter, the rest drained.

The flesh

All the fat and kidneys burnt (Lev 7).

Accompanying offerings

Grain offering

6. The Drink Offering

Antitype in Jesus

The joy of God and man in the obedience of Jesus in dying voluntarily for man.

Gladness will also occurring at the millennial reign and hence points to a future time of gladness. See also Paul's allusion to gladness in Philippians 2:17

Bible

Exodus 29:40-42

Numbers 15:1-13, 28:7

The Offering

Strong wine poured out to the Lord in the Holy Place. The fourth part of wine (joy) and the fourth part of oil (Holy Spirit) indicates our joy is proportional to the power of the Holy Spirit (oil) - these two always had to correspond in quantity.

Role of the offerer

Could only offer this sacrifice in connection which is set forth in the death and life of Jesus
- i.e. as set forth by the burnt and grain offering.

The blood

Not bloody

The flesh

No flesh

Accompanying offerings

This offering accompanied morning and evening burnt sacrifices.

David L Simon (edited * March 2016)

Summarised from "Walter Scott (c.1879) Handbook to the Bible Old Testament, Edinburgh, which may have been republished

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