



PRAYING WITH PURPOSE MINISTRIES

The Book of Leviticus

OUTLINE

I. Importance of Sacrifices in Old Testament

“For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.” (Leviticus 11:45)

A. Institution of the Priestly Sacrificial System (Leviticus 1–7)

1. Whole burnt offering
2. Grain offering
3. Peace offering
4. Sin/purification offering
5. Reparation offering

B. Consecration of the Aaronic Priesthood (Leviticus 8–9)

1. Ordination of Aaron and his sons
2. Priest installation
3. Rules of priestly conduct

C. Laws Governing Purity (Leviticus 11–16)

1. Clean and unclean animals
2. Purification after childbirth
3. Leprosy
4. Purification after leprosy
5. Unclean discharges
6. Ritual for the Day of Atonement



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II. Laws of Sanctification

- A. Holiness Code (Leviticus 17–26)
 - 1. Regulations concerning blood
 - 2. Forbidden sexual relations
 - 3. Ethical rules of conduct
 - 4. Penalties for various sins
 - 5. Holiness of priests
 - 6. Holiness of offerings
 - 7. Calendar of feasts
 - 8. Service of the sanctuary
 - 9. Sabbatical year
 - 10. Rewards and punishments
- B. Special vows and their redemption
 - 1. Special consecrating of acceptable things
 - 2. Things excluded from consecration



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NOTES

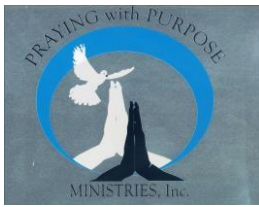
God declares in the Book of Exodus that He will live among His people, the Israelites. Approximately the last third of the Book of Exodus describes God directing Moses to make preparations for Him to live in the Israelite camp. These preparations included handing down to Moses the “Law” or Ten Commandments (Mt. Sinai/Horeb Covenant), construction of the temporary or movable tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, and establishing the Aaronic Priesthood which would serve to coordinate or mediate the worship rituals of His people. The Book of Exodus ends with the people of Israel camped at the foothills of Mount Horeb or Mount Sinai, the Holy Mountain of God.

The Book of Leviticus can be viewed as a progressive continuation of God preparing His people to live in His presence. Why did the Israelites have to be ‘prepared’ in order to live in God’s presence? God is a holy God and He requires His people to be holy also, according to Leviticus 11:45, *“I am the LORD, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.”* Sin cannot exist in God’s presence. The consequence of sin in the presence of God is death to the sinner. In fact, multiple times in scripture, God admonishes or warns His people on how they should approach Him, so that they ‘will not die’. God desired to live among His people, but His people were a sinful community. God often characterizes them as a disobedient, stiff-necked and rebellious people.

The book of Leviticus deals with a fundamental question:

How can rebellious people meet God and exist in His presence?

Well, God established a mechanism whereby the Israelites could dwell in His presence through sacrificial rituals. Consequently, sacrifices in the Old Testament were very important because God could only be approached by the sacrificial



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offerings, mediated by the priesthood and by the purification of the people from uncleanness. Therefore, the priestly sacrificial system was instituted with the consecration of Aaron and his sons, and the laws governing purity was given, as well as, the laws of sanctification. In essence, the only way that the sin of the Israelites could be addressed so that they could live in God's presence without dying, was that their sin had to be paid for. And the price God established for the payment of sin was blood.

The sacrificial rituals described in the Book of Leviticus accomplished two objectives: 1) they provide a mechanism for God to provide a covering or temporary payment for the sin of the Israelites; so, they would not die in His presence; and 2) they provided a means for the Israelites to worship God. Both objectives 1 and 2 represent different aspects of how the Israelites were to minister to God through the Aaronic priestly system.

This set of notes will only discuss specifically the burnt offering and the fellowship offering. It is hoped that a discussion of these two offerings will provide sufficient background to enhance study of each of the offerings detailed in Leviticus. Let's first consider the burnt offering. Leviticus 1:1–9 below describes the burnt offering and reads as follows:

"¹ The LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting. He said, ² "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When anyone among you brings an offering to the LORD, bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock.'³ "If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, you are to offer a male without defect. You must present it at the entrance to the tent of meeting so that it will be acceptable to the LORD. ⁴ You are to lay your hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on your behalf to make atonement for you. ⁵ You are to slaughter the young bull before the LORD, and then Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the blood and splash it against the sides of the altar at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. ⁶ You are to skin the burnt offering and cut it into pieces. ⁷ The sons of Aaron the priest are to put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. ⁸ Then Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, including the head and the fat, on the wood that is burning on the altar. ⁹ You



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are to wash the internal organs and the legs with water, and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.”

This passage identifies the type of offering — it is a burnt offering. It identifies the type of animal that should be used for the burnt offering — an animal without defect from the herd or flock. This reminds us that we should always give to God our very best. Verses 3–9 from the above passage describes the ritual of an animal from the herd. Verse 4 indicates that hands must be laid on the head of the animal and it is implied that then it (the animal) will be acceptable to the Lord to make atonement for the individual. The laying of hands on the head of the animal is symbolic of transferring the sins of the individual to the animal. Since the sins of the person have been transferred from the individual to the animal, the individual is now (at least temporarily presentable to God) and the animal is carrying the guilt of the person. Just like Jesus, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, the animal is now guilty and suitable to pay the price for the guilt of being made sinful. Accordingly, the rest of the passage discusses the slaughter of the animal and how its blood, tissues, and organs are to be handled. Notice that the priests are the ones to handle the blood and tissues of the slaughtered animal. This gives some insight into the role of the priests in coordinating the worship and ministering to God on behalf of the people.

It is also noteworthy that all this takes place at the Tent of Meeting—the place where God had placed His Name, which is symbolic of where His presence lives among His people. Verse 9 reveals that the organs are to be burned completely on the alter in front of the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and that it is regarded as a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. In other words, not only is the burnt offering acceptable by God for the atonement of the individual, but He finds it enjoyable. It pleases Him. Since it pleases Him, it is strongly suggestive that God also accepts it as worship. The remainder of Chapter 1 describes additional types of burnt offerings that are acceptable to God and how they are to be handled.

Leviticus 1:14–17, describes the process of using birds or young pigeons as burnt offerings. It is implied in the Old Testament that animals from the herd (cows) and animals from the flock (sheep or goats) are generally more valuable; therefore, more expensive than birds. The allowance of birds as acceptable for the burnt



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offering appears to be an allowance by God for those who may not have access to the more valuable animals. The implication is that God has made provision for all individuals to atone for their sins and worship Him.

An additional type of offering is the fellowship or peace offering.

Aspects of the fellowship offering are described in Leviticus 3:1–5:

“If your offering is a fellowship offering, and you offer an animal from the herd, whether male or female, you are to present before the LORD an animal without defect. ² You are to lay your hand on the head of your offering and slaughter it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Then Aaron’s sons the priests shall splash the blood against the sides of the altar. ³ From the fellowship offering you are to bring a food offering to the LORD: the internal organs and all the fat that is connected to them, ⁴ both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which you will remove with the kidneys. ⁵ Then Aaron’s sons are to burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering that is lying on the burning wood; it is a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.”

As well as Leviticus 7:16–18:

¹⁶ “If, however, their offering is the result of a vow or is a freewill offering, the sacrifice shall be eaten on the day they offer it, but anything left over may be eaten on the next day. ¹⁷ Any meat of the sacrifice left over till the third day must be burned up. ¹⁸ If any meat of the fellowship offering is eaten on the third day, the one who offered it will not be accepted. It will not be reckoned to their credit, for it has become impure; the person who eats any of it will be held responsible.”

A key distinction between the burnt offering and the fellowship offering is that the burnt offering is completely consumed by fire, while only certain portions of fellowship offerings are burned by fire. Keep in mind that which is burned by fire is regarded as a pleasing aroma by God and is acceptable by Him. Other specified portions are set aside for the priests to eat and the remainder edible portions may be eaten by individual members of the Israelite community. That which is burned



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by fire is considered food for God. In a sense, this offering may be looked upon as a fellowship meal among the individual, the priest that presides over the worship and God Himself.

Hopefully, the discussion of the burnt offering and fellowship offering provides some framework for a better understanding of the remaining types of sacrificial rituals mentioned in the Book of Leviticus.

The Book of Leviticus also includes detailed discussions (Chapters 11–26) of how the Israelites were to conduct themselves in their everyday life affairs. This included instructions involving clean and unclean food, purification after childbirth, how to handle infectious diseases, how Aaron the priest must make atonement for the Tent of Meeting, and including but not limited to various laws and rules which were to govern their society. When you combine the sacrificial instructions associated with how the Israelites were to worship God and minister to Him with the rules and laws affecting day-to-day life, it becomes apparent that God is giving His people a comprehensive code of ethics/conduct to live by. There is a set of behaviors that distinguishes His people from the surrounding peoples. This set of behaviors not only kept the Israelite camp clean and pure, but allowed God to live in the camp without causing death among them. It also reminds us today that God expects His people to be distinctly different from un-believers.

The code of ethics/conduct that God provided in Leviticus is a part of His nation building process. In the Book of Leviticus, God was in the process of converting this large group of people (assembly) that He brought out of Egypt into a nation that would take and subsequently occupy the Promised Land. The code of ethics/conduct serves to provide definition for the Israelites that they are indeed God's people—a separate nation—a holy nation! The code of ethics/conduct was a visible sign to both the Israelites and the surrounding peoples that they were different.

Finally, it should be noted that the surrounding peoples and those that were in the land of Canaan, heard about the exploits of the God of the Israelites and how He brought His people out of Egyptian slavery. They saw the swarm of people filling up the desert. All this put fear in the hearts of the surrounding peoples. They saw the blessings of God in the lives of the Israelites and it took the fight out of them.



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Now, the question is “Are we conducting our lives in such a manner that our friends, neighbors, co-workers can see how distinct we are from the world?” “Can they see the blessings of God in our lives?” “When we walk into a room or meeting, do those that may oppose us start to feel defeated at our presence?”

The Sacred Saga continues to unfold. We saw in Genesis how God called one man, Abram, to obey Him and from his offspring started a nation. In Exodus, God calls Moses to obey Him to deliver the people from bondage. Now, in Leviticus, God calls a nation to obey Him because He wants them to be a “holy nation.” The principle of obedience stands out so clearly in the book of Leviticus, which is God’s plan to reward our lives. God wanted to reward them as His very own precious treasure, a royal priesthood a “holy nation.”

PRAYER

Father, I pray as believers, we would see ourselves as the “royal priesthood, a holy nation” that You have called out — to be in the world, but not of the world. May we as a holy priesthood offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to You, God, by Jesus Christ, our High Priest. For You have made us kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth according to Your Word in Revelation 5:10. To You be glory and dominion forever, in Jesus’ Name. Amen.