

Leviticus 1-7

“Holy Offerings”

Introduction

- Tonight we are going to begin a study in the book of Leviticus.

Now it kind of comical – I am going to give you a little inside baseball - when you go to speak at retreats and camps and they ask you what you are going to share – the response I always give it, the Levitical grain offerings – I say that because it is a joke – it is the high dry dusty portion of all scripture – and what is funny about that it we are really there tonight.

- That is exactly where we are at tonight for real.
 - But you did not pick a bad night to come.
 - I joke – but Leviticus is an amazing book.

In fact I was amazed to learn that when Jewish children began their study of the Torah, they begin with the book of Leviticus, now you would think they would start with Genesis.

- But they would begin by learning the book of Leviticus.
 - And we will get to why that was in just a minute.
 - But first some background info on this very important book.

Leviticus literally means, “as pertaining to the Levities”.

- It was written by Moses to give the Levities instructions on how to do their sacrifices, how they were to lead a county spiritually.

Who wrote this book?

- Of course the traditional answer is Moses wrote them.
 - Now we understand that the last few verses of Deuteronomy record his death, so he most likely did not write that, but Joshua who would write the next book of the Bible.

But most of the Bible claims it was Moses – Deut. 1:8, II Kings 13:23.

- Jesus in Matthew 19:8, Luke 16:29, Luke 24:27.
 - Paul says it in Romans 10:5.

But in modern times we have The Critical View – or the Documentary Hypothesis (theory).

- Developed by German Theologians - basically stated whenever you saw God called by a different name for God or different styles it was a different author.
 - Author J – preferred the Word Jehovah to describe God – Jehovist document.
 - Author E – preferred Elohim – Elohist document.
 - Author P – priest then the priests added their part – P Document – most the book of Leviticus, they felt like we do, who would be interested in this stuff other than priests – so they wrote Leviticus – but not just Leviticus, but if Abraham stops to make a sacrifice, that was written by a priest.
 - Author D - the Deuteronmist made the final revision – Deuteronomist document.

These critics’ reference examples like - The Offering of Isaac had to be different than the Abraham who pled for Sodom and Gomorrah.

- People wonder why the contradiction – well it is different sources.

Problem is you see the different names of God seen in one verse – Genesis 2:4 – Lord God (Yehwah Elohim).

- Have they every found these four documents? – No.
 - And there is no archeological evidence for this at all.
 - No Jewish writings back it up at all.
 - However the Jewish Talmud states that Moses is the author.

- Yet this theory is not taught as fact – you put out a theory – Maybe this is the way it is – and then people start to believe it.

Now this theory and that is all it is, a theory, but this theory has some serious problems.

- #1 - The Bible claims it was Moses – Deut. 1:8, II Kings 13:23.
 - #2 - Jesus in Matthew 19:8, Luke 16:29, Luke 24:27.
 - #3 – Paul Romans 10:5.

Those who believe that is not true have a problem with Jesus saying Moses wrote.

- #1 – Jesus was ignorant – in His humanity – He was so limited, He was subject to the ignorance of the day.
- #2 – Jesus the accommodator – Jesus is a liar, He knew, but decided not to create waves – now doesn't that sound just like Jesus.
- #3 – Or Jesus is correct – I'll stick with Jesus and Paul – really Jesus and Paul is good with me.

So Moses wrote this book, Leviticus, pertaining to the Levities.

- To show them how to offer sacrifices, how to purify themselves and the people.

We can say, “That doesn't sound very important”.

- But the New Testament authors would disagree with you.
 - The book of Leviticus is quoted over 100 times.
- But why, why, why???
- Why does it apply to me?
- Why would Jewish children start with a book that seems to be the opposite of relevant?
- Why is this important to me?

Well while it is true that Leviticus was an instruction manual for the priests, the theme of the book is Holiness to the Lord.

- And that applies to all of God's people at all times.

The word Holiness or a form of it appears over 200 times in this relatively short 27-chapter book.

- Holiness to the Lord encapsulates what Leviticus is about.
 - All the things we will learn about this month will be helping us grow in holiness.

The idea of Holiness, especially personal holiness of the believer, sadly is an idea rarely considered anymore.

- And it's a shame because when you look at the Bible and you begin to discover what God's ultimate aim is for us all.
 - It is not happiness – like you hear so often on TV and in the latest Christian books.
 - God's ultimate aim and desire for you, is that you would be Holy.
- And the funny thing about it is – when you are Holy, when you are walking in Holiness:
 - That is when you are the happiest.
 - Holiness produces Happiness – not the other way around – once I'm happy, I'll be holy.

It has been said that what health does for the body, holiness does for the soul.

- And this takes on greater significance when you realize Holiness literally means wholeness.
 - It means when you and I are walking in the way God desires us to – there will be wholeness to our lives.

- A wholeness that is missing when we are walking in the ways of the flesh.

Holiness unto the Lord

- It is the theme of Leviticus, it will also serve as our outline - We can remember the content of the book of Leviticus by remembering Holiness.

The Book of Leviticus – Holiness unto the Lord

Holy Offerings – Leviticus 1-7

Holy Priesthood – Leviticus 8-10, 21-22

Holy People – Leviticus 11-15, 17-20, 26-27

Holy Calendar – Leviticus 16, 23-25

- Last week we looked at the five Holy offerings that the priests would offer with the people.

So as we open up to chapter one understand the context of what has just happened.

- In the Book of Exodus we have the story of God developing His man, to deliver His people and to dwell with them by the building of the tabernacle.
 - And in doing this God leads them through the wilderness, the last camping spot being Mt Sinai.
 - There, God gives them the law and instructions to build the tabernacle.
- Then God has Moses write Leviticus.
 - Giving instructions of what to do in that tabernacle and worship of the Lord throughout the year.

Now in Chapters 1-7, the chapters we are looking at this evening, God outlines 5 very specific sacrifices that Israel was to bring before the Lord at the tabernacle they had just built.

5 Holy Sacrifices

#1 – The Burnt Offering – Dedication of Self-Leviticus Chapter 1

- The offering mentioned in Leviticus chapter one is known as the burnt offering
 - It expressed your devotion and commitment to the Lord.

The ritual was specific, and it could not be altered.

- Male animal – it had to be inspected by the priests to make sure it was without spot or blemish.

The priests would lay his hands on the animal signifying the transfer of an identification with the animal – just as this animal is wholly dedicate to you Lord, so am I.

- The person would then kill the animal and the priest would catch the blood in a basin and then sprinkle the blood on the altar posts or corners.
 - The body was then dismembered, the insides taken out and washed.
 - Then everything was burned on the altar except the hide, which was given to the priests.

The symbolism again as with the design of the tabernacle so with the offerings in the tabernacle they point to Jesus.

- He was the sinless lamb.
 - Inspected by the priest, found without spot our blemish.
- Then He offered Himself upon the cross.

Jesus made it clear, “No one takes my life from me, I lay it down of myself” – John 10:18

- We see from the garden of Gethsemane that He more than just redeeming mankind was going on at the cross.
 - It was a surrender of a life to God, “Not my will but yours be done, Jesus spoke to the Father”.

- And as they were offering this burnt sacrifice it is what the people were saying to God - my life is yours.

Now though the sacrifice has a very specific way to be done, you could offer a variety of animals.

- If you were wealthy you would offer a male bull.
 - Owning a cow in that day as in this day is a huge financial commitment and to just kill one to honor the Lord was more than the average person could afford to do – but if you were rich you were to offer a bull.

Now if you were middle class, the Lord says you can bring a male sheep.

- Having sheep is not as costly of an investment as having cattle, so if you were middle class you would bring a sheep.

Now if you were poor, you could bring a fowl.

- And this brings up an interesting point because in the gospels we see Jesus' parents bringing a burnt offering of a turtledove to the Lord.
 - Showing Jesus did not come from a wealthy family, but a very poor family.

But what we learn from the Burnt Offering is you gave according to your blessing.

- If you were wealthy you were to give something that cost you a lot, you were not to offer a bird, the would-be fowl, no, you were to offer a bird.
 - And if you were poor, you could offer a fowl, but everyone, no matter what his or her financial situation, was to give something to the Lord.

And the Burnt offering is the only offering that is totally consumed on the altar

- Some of the offerings we will see in just a minute, a part was burnt, but then the rest was for either the priests or the people offering the animal to eat.
 - But the Burnt offering hide was given to the priests because where else would a pastor get calf-skinned boots.
 - But all kidding aside...
- Other than the hide, the whole thing was consumed because again, it is a picture of what our act of dedication should be.
 - Lord we want to be Holy.
 - And that doesn't meant you get only a part of our lives, but these dark corners are still ours.
- No – you were saying Lord “my life is totally yours”.

5 Holy Sacrifices

#1 – The Burnt Offering – Dedication of Self

#2 – The Grain Offering – Consecration of Service

Leviticus chapter 2

- Read all of chapter 2

Now the second offering was called the grain offering or the meal offering, and it was to dedicate your service or what you did to the Lord.

- This could be offered in one of five ways:
 - Fine flour.
 - Oven baked cakes.
 - Cakes baked in cans.
 - Cakes baked in frying pans or
 - Crushed roasted heads of grains.

In these times most people lived in an agrarian culture, meaning they were farmers.

- And so they would dedicate not just themselves, but their lively hoods to the Lord as well.

- And the way they would do this is to take a portion of the grain in their fields and bring it to the tabernacle.

Now as they brought their bag of grain, the priests were to offer a handful of the grain on the altar, and the rest they would keep for themselves and their families.

- Remember the tribe of Levi would not be given any land when Joshua would divide up the promise land.
 - They were to be the priests and they were to be taken care of by the offerings of the people they were ministering to.
- And when we read chapter 6 and 7, it just amplifies something about these five offerings that we learn about in chapters 1-5.

And one of the things God says about giving this portion to the priests is that you are not to change their portion.

- And I think God does that because He knows how people are in every generation.
 - We get to the point where we say – what are we paying that guy, and what are we paying that guy for, to teach Bible studies, I don't even like Bible studies.
 - God says, give the priests their portion.
- The ministry is not a place to get rich; pastors in my opinion should not live an extravagant lifestyle.
 - But I do believe it is biblical for ministers to live off the offerings of the people they minister to.

I feed my family from what you guys give to this ministry.

- And the sobering thing for my wife and I is that we want to be wise with the money you entrust to the church and the portion the leadership decides to give to me.
 - I count it a great privilege, a great honor to minister to you.
- But, I also don't feel bad that this is the way my family's needs are met. God set it up early on in the Bible and He says, don't change it.

Now I do find it interesting that God says, when it comes to this offering, which is tied into what you do.

- I don't want it to be with leaven and I don't want it to be with honey.
 - And the reason for that is leaven is a picture of sin in the Word – God is saying, what you do for me, I don't want sin to taint it.
- And the honey, nothing wrong with honey, except that it breaks down under high temps.

And I think when God said I want you offering to have oil, a symbol of the Spirit, and salt, lots of salt, a picture of purity.

- I think God is saying, what you do for me, I want it to be by the power of the Holy Spirit, not the energy of the flesh. I want to be done in purity, not in sin or hypocrisy, you know we live one way, but the minute the heat is turned up in our lives, we break down, like honey.
 - No – by the Spirit, with purity – that is how I want you work to be for me says the Lord.

5 Holy Sacrifices

#1 – The Burnt Offering – Dedication of Self

#2 – The Grain Offering – Consecration of Service

#3 – The Peace Offering – Celebration of salvation

Leviticus Chapter 3

- Read all of chapter 3

The peace offering was distinct and different from the burnt offering.

- It was the only offering where the people and the priests shared in the eating of the offering.

- We get more information on the sacrifices in the chapters of 6-7, as you would offer this sacrifice...
- The Priests were given certain parts.
 - The right thigh and the breast of the animal for them to feast on.
- The offerer and his family were allowed to eat all the remaining portions, except those that were to be given to the Lord.
 - And so in that, the priests, the people, and God were in communion together through this offering.

And to a Jewish mind to understand what a significant thing this was.

- To a Jewish mind to sit down and eat with someone meant you were one with that person because what you were eating and becoming a part of you, they were also eating and becoming a part of him or her.
 - So at this offering – you as the giver, the priests and even God was partaking in the same meal.
 - And it was a picture of fellowship that is supposed to exist in and among people who believe.

But it's crazy to think that God wants that kind of intimacy with us.

- Because we know us, we know how awful we really are.
 - And God is saying – I want to be with you, I love it when you pray and praise and talk with me.

And I think this understanding so affects our practical holiness.

- When I picture God in the sky, waiting for me to do something wrong so He can judge me...
 - That doesn't produce anything good, especially not holiness.

Now I'm not saying, as some teach that therefore there are no rules.

- No – I mean the Jewish man that had to slit the throat of an innocent animal, knew better than any of us how ugly sin really is to God.
 - I am not saying that there are no rules, or sin won't have devastating effects and therefore we need to run from it.

I am just saying to realize that God loves me, and forgives me, and wants fellowship with me.

- First of all I don't understand why.

But if I will embrace that – and hang out with Him, at church, in His Word in the morning, driving down the road praying and listening to worship.

- Well – part of who He is is becoming part of who I am.
 - He is Holy – so I become more Holy – as I see the priority in my life to be with Him, to love on Him, to commune with Him.
 - His likeness is being burned in me.

This peace offering was given because the people were just so blessed to be right with God, at peace with God, that the war was over.

- And don't you feel that way?
 - I am so thankful, with all of my faults and failures, I am right with God.
 - If you can remember a time when you were not, then you know why you should be so thankful that there is peace between you and God.

This peace offering, partly given to the priests, partly kept by the offerer, and partly burnt by the Lord in a act of communion is interesting to me as to which parts the Lord kept for His own.

God says, “ I want to take the fatty parts”.

- In fact I love Leviticus 3:16, it is my favorite 3:16 in the entire Bible.
 - Some like John 3:16 – for God so love the world...
 - Some like II Timothy 3:16 – all scripture is given...
- But my favorite in Leviticus 3:16 – all the fat is the Lord's...

You see I am just trying to be more of the Lord – if you can get to 50 percent body fat and all the fat is the Lord's – that means no matter what I do at least half of life will be the Lord's, of course if you stay at that too long all of your life will be the Lord – literally because you will be with Him.

But before we move on...

- All kidding aside, for centuries the best part of the meat was considered to be the fat.
 - You mix it with the meat and the taste – oh so good – and I agree – Rib Eye steaks – oh man, the marbling of Meat and fat, the taste is so good.
 - So ancient cultures considered it the best of the meat.
- And so the understanding and thinking was that God here is demanding the best for Himself.
 - And that is the misunderstanding we have about God sometimes.

Lord you are such a hard taskmaster; you want the best of my time, the best years of my life.

- You want to take my years of drinking and sleeping around – and just give those years to you.
 - You want to take part of my income so I don't get to spend every single dollar I make on me.
 - God you are so cruel.
 - So you want all the fat – all the best part of the meat for yourself.
- That is what we think – but what have we learned?

We have learned that a fat filled diet, isn't good for you at all.

- In fact it will be the death of you if that is way you eat all the time.
 - So what God is in fact saying to them, is I want to separate you from those things that I know, you don't, but I know will be harmful for you.
 - So give them to me – I don't have high cholesterol – give them to me, and I will give you the good parts of the meat.

And God is doing the same thing with our lives.

- He is not trying to steal your joy.
 - He is trying to bless your life.
 - By keeping you from things that will rip you off and destroy your joy.
 - God is wise in what He tells us to do, He always has been.

5 Holy Sacrifices

#1 – The Burnt Offering – Dedication of Self

#2 – The Grain Offering – Consecration of Service

#3 – The Peace Offering – Celebration of salvation

#4 – The Sin Offering – Propitiation toward God

Leviticus Chapter 4

- Read 4:1-12

Now we move to the fourth of five offers and this one was for the sin of the people.

- It was to cover them until one day another lamb would be offered for the sins of the people and our sins would be taken away.
 - Now there are some things that stick out to me about this offering.
 - First of all it is not to cover the sins the people did intentionally – that will be covered in our final offering, the trespass offering.

If we are going to be Bible students we need to understand the different between sin and trespass.

The Word “sin” simply means to miss the mark.

- In archery, you set up a target and if you miss the target with the arrow, you have missed the goal.
- The goal for you and me is absolute perfection, miss the target, and we’re called a sinner.

Jesus said in Matthew chapter 5 – “Be perfect as the father in heaven is perfect” – Matthew 5:48

- Well thank you Jesus for setting the bar so low.
 - Perfection – is that all I have to do?

But that is the standard – if we are going to heaven on our own merits, we have to be perfect.

- And because of our sin nature, you and I both know we may be trying to hit the goal, we may be trying to please the Lord – just like those archers were trying to hit the target.
 - But if we miss and we all do – you are sinner.
 - Whether that sin is intentional or unintentional.

You see a lot of people have in their minds, well if I try to do what’s right, if my good deeds outweigh my bad – as long as I am sincere – when I get to heaven, God will accept me.

- But that is just not a right understanding.
 - God’s law demands perfect obedience and if you don’t perfectly obey it, even if you do it unintentionally, then you are a sinner and need forgiveness and a savior.

Now that strikes us as not fair, I was trying, but lets put that into our daily lives.

- If I am going down Interstate 5 heading to San Diego, and I am not in a hurry, I am not trying to a make a flight; I am just enjoying the drive.
 - But my mind begins to wander.

I begin to think of my wife and how pretty she is.

- I begin to think of my kids and how much I love them.
 - I begin to think of how poor USC football looked against Hawaii and I can’t wait for this years UCLA USC game.
 - I begin to think back to how the Dodgers just swept the Padres – you know my mind is wandering.
- And all of sudden I am going 80 miles an hour down the freeway, and Mr. Police officer is behind me with lights flashing and pulls me over.

Do you know how fast you were going?

- I don’t, I was daydreaming.
 - You were going 80 miles an hour.
 - Oh but officer, I didn’t mean to, I really had no intention of speeding; my mind was just on other wonderful things.
- Do you think that officer would say, so you really meant to keep the speed limit – well okay then – no ticket for you.
 - That would never happen. You are going to get a ticket.

So if we expect that from the State of California, how much more is it okay to expect from a holy God.

- He has a law, we have broken it and we are guilty, we need something to pay for our sin.

In that day it was a bull or a lamb without blemish.

- That lamb was taken outside of the camp.
 - And that person, who had sinned, killed that animal as a substitute for him or herself.

Again the symbolism

- Jesus is the perfect lamb – He never did anything wrong.
 - They took Him outside the city of Jerusalem.

Just to add insult to injury, this perfect man was marched outside the city to be crucified.

- Why – because that is what always happened to an offering for sin.
 - They took Him outside the city and then we put Him to death.
 - It was my sin that nailed Jesus to the cross.
- We can blame the Jews or the Romans, but it was my sin and your sin He was paying for there on the cross.

He was paying the price that you and I deserved - For everything we have ever done – anybody thankful for Jesus????

5 Holy Sacrifices

#1 – The Burnt Offering – Dedication of Self

#2 – The Grain Offering – Consecration of Service

#3 – The Peace Offering – Celebration of salvation

#4 – The Sin Offering – Propitiation toward God

#5 – The Trespass Offering – Reconciliation with man

- Read 5:1-16

The final offering talked about in these first seven chapters, chapters 6-7 by the way go into more detail on these five offerings.

- Some of what we have talked about as we have gone through the offerings was identical to what you learned from chapters 6 and 7 and I would leave those for you to read on your own.
 - But this final sacrifice was the trespass offering.

Now again remember the difference.

Sin – missing the mark

Trespass – willful disobedience

- The sin offering dealt with our nature as sinners, these we do just unintentionally just because we are sinners.

The Trespass offering was for those sins done unintentionally as well, but it also dealt with intentional sin.

- Sometimes, because if you read chapter 5, it does talk about sins done again unintentionally, I have heard some Bible teachers say, there were no sacrifices for intentional sin in the Old Testament.
 - But that just not accurate.

I mean, look at verse one of chapter 5 as the first description of what this offering was for.

- If you hear someone make an oath.

You see in early history not everybody could read or write and so contracts were not always written pieces of paper, but they would bring in a friend and you would witness what the other person promised to pay or do.

- Now, if that person then defaulted and you were brought it to testify on what they promised to do, but you didn't want to loose the friendship you stayed silent.
 - Well then you are one who have violated verse one.
- But think that through – that is a willful sin.

- Oh I didn't mean to not tell the truth – only politicians can get away with that.
- It's a willful sin.
- So this offering is for both.

The difference and distinction with the trespass offering is not only was it also for sins done intentionally but it also contained a payment you would have to make to the one you had wronged - verse 16.

- If you stole something, you had to repay what you stole, plus an additional 20 percent.
- It is really an ingenious system.

Not only were you being made right with God, but in the trespass offering, you were also making things right with your fellow man.

- And God cares about both.
 - He wants us to be right with Him.
 - But we are to also be right with our fellow man.
- It is not that we can sin against people all we want and then come to church and say, well I am so glad God has forgiven me.
 - Holiness is dealing with our fellow man as well.

This idea is repeated in the New Testament when Jesus says,

“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” – Matthew 5:23-24

- Jesus says if you are coming to get right with you and me know you have done something that has left someone having something against you.
 - Then go, don't stay and worship.
 - Go and get right with your brother, with your sister, then come and worship me.
 - God cares about both or vertical relationship with Him and our horizontal relationship others.
- And God cares about both.

Now one more thing before we close up shop tonight and that is that if you notice when God is telling them what is acceptable to be offered for their sin:

- He lists a lamb or a goat. – Verse 6
- If you were poor, or as rich people say it poorer – I remember in the debates last election cycle Mitt Romney kept saying he wanted to help the poorer – I have never heard a poor person say, poorer.

If you were poorer, then you could offer a two young pigeons. – Verse 7.

- And then note this, if you were super poorer, verse 11, you could an offering of flour for your sin.
 - Don't put any oil in it, the symbol of the Holy Spirit – your sin is not of the Spirit, don't put any frankincense on it – your sin doesn't smell good - but if you were really, really poor, you could offer flour for your sin.

Now why am I pointing this out?

- Because they are teaching the rabbis in Israel something right now, you need to be aware of.
 - I have heard well meaning people say, when you meet a practicing Jew or if you go to Israel, you need to ask them what are they doing to do deal with their sin.
- There is no temple in Jerusalem right now, nor sacrifices being made, so what are they doing for their sin.
 - They will say, I'm asking forgiveness.

- I am having a humble heart.
- And the well meaning Christian will say, quoting a verse from Hebrews, **“without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins” – Hebrews 9:22.**

So sorry Mr. Jewish man, if there is no shedding of blood, then there is not forgiveness of sins.

- We have the blood of Jesus shed for us, you have nothing, and therefore your sins are not forgiven.
 - But they are teaching Rabbis today to consider Leviticus chapter 5 – that one of the acceptable offerings for sin was flour.
- And they are saying that these Christians who say blood must be shed, and the writer to Hebrews is out to lunch.

So what is the answer? Was the author of Hebrews mistaken?

- Well we will get to that answer on our final night in Leviticus a month from now.
 - Just kidding – I wouldn’t do that do you, well I would but you would have forgotten a month from now that an important question needed to be answered.

In our last two nights going through Leviticus we will learn about Seven Feasts, holidays the Jewish people were to keep.

- And one of them is the Day of Atonement.
 - Where the High priest would go in before the Presence of the Lord and offer a lamb for all the people, for all their sins for that year.
- And these others offerings were to be done to maintain personal holiness – like our asking of forgiveness – Lord I messed up, please forgive me – that is important.
 - But without that Day of Atonement – where the lamb was offered for the sins of the nation, these individual sacrifices were null and void.
 - Just as we can say, Lord I’m sorry all we want, if Jesus had not died for our sins, our sorry hearts wouldn’t matter a bit.

So the answer is, these very, very poor could offer flour for their sin to maintain their personal holiness but only because a lamb had been slain for the sins of the nation.

- You see the writer of Hebrews was correct.
- **“Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins” – Hebrews 9:22.**

It is good for us to dedicate ourselves to God (burnt offering). It is good for us to consecrate what we do to the Lord (grain offering). It is good for us to fellowship with the Lord and others (peace offering). It is good for us to tell the Lord we are sorry (sin offering) and makes things right with our fellow man (trespass offering) – but without Jesus, the lamb and His blood, it would all be meaningless – thank you God for Jesus!!! – Our sacrifice for sin!