

Introduction to Leviticus

Leviticus 1:1-17

INTRODUCTION: The five major offerings must first be introduced:

Identity of the Five Offerings:

The Levitical sacrificial system had five separate and distinct offerings that could be made to the Lord. These are the five major offerings that are introduced in the first five chapters of Leviticus. They are:

1. The Burnt Offering (Leviticus 1)
2. The Meat Offering (Leviticus 2)
3. The Peace Offering (Leviticus 3)
4. The Sin Offering (Leviticus 4)
5. The Trespass Offering (Leviticus 5)

Other offerings are mentioned in the Mosaic Law. These other offerings include those made for a vow (called votive), thank offerings, drink offerings, heave offerings, and wave offerings. However, these offerings are usually, if not always, a subset of the five major offerings. For instance, the thank offering is a type of peace offering. These offerings will not be considered in detail in this introduction.

Purpose of the Five Offerings:

The offerings of the law almost require a threefold approach.

- First, they provide a way for the Israelites to make and keep a right relationship with God.
- Second, they are a type of Jesus Christ and a description of His sacrifice for us.
- Third, they are a pattern for our own approach to God. The difference between the Old Testament Israelites and the New Testament saints is the Israelites were to

Survey of the Five Major Offerings:

- Burnt Offering (Leviticus 1)
 - Only offering to be totally consumed on the altar with nothing eaten by men
 - First offering mentioned by name in the Bible (Genesis 8:20)
 - Most common of the offerings mentioned in scripture (197 times)
 - Voluntary offering and a sweet savor to the Lord
 - Indicates entire surrender
- Meat Offering (Leviticus 2)

- Only offering made without the shedding of blood and without an animal sacrifice
- Offering of fine flour; no animal flesh
- Voluntary offering and a sweet savor to the Lord
- Indicates a living sacrifice
- Peace Offering (Leviticus 3)
 - Only offering in which the offerer could eat of the meat of the sacrifice
 - Voluntary offering and a sweet savor to the Lord
 - Indicates fellowship or communion
- Sin Offering (Leviticus 4)
 - Required offering; not a sweet savor
 - Dealt with the sinner and the problem of sin
 - Indicates payment for the sin nature
- Trespass Offering (Leviticus 5)
 - Required offering; not a sweet savor
 - Dealt with particular sins
 - Indicates forgiveness of committed sins

The Five Animals Used in the Offerings: (first mentioned together in Genesis 15:9)

- Oxen – service and strength (Proverbs 14:4)
- Sheep – meekness and purity (Isaiah 53:7)
- Goats – sin and judgment (Christ became sin for us)
- Pigeon – poverty (Leviticus 12:8)
- Turtledoves – innocence (Psalm 74:19)

The Order of the Five Offerings in Leviticus 1-5

They mark a progression of closeness to God with the first offering mentioned being the closest to God and the last one being the first step in approaching God. This seemingly backwards approach is not unusual in the Bible. God usually begins from His perspective, not ours. He describes the furniture of the most holy place first and then proceeds to the holy place and the courtyard. He creates heaven and then earth (Genesis 1:1). He lists the three-part nature of man as spirit first, then soul, then body (1Thesalonians 5:23).

First, consider the order of the offerings as they point to the sacrifice of Christ.

Burnt Offering	Christ surrendered Himself entirely to God being fully consumed in His commitment (Philippians 2:6-8)
Meat Offering	Christ gave Himself as a living sacrifice continually doing the will of the Father (John 4:34)
Peace Offering	Christ made peace with God on the behalf of man (Ephesians 2:13-14)
Sin Offering	Christ atoned for our fallen sin nature on the cross and satisfied the wrath of God (Isaiah 53:10-11; Hebrews 9:26)
Trespass Offering	Christ paid for our individual sins in His death on the cross (Hebrews 10:12)

However, when we come to God, we must do so in reverse order. Notice the following table with the offerings given in reverse order and their symbology explained.

Trespass Offering	We realize the guilt of our sins and our need for forgiveness of these sins in Jesus Christ (1John 2:2)
Sin Offering	We need a power that can even conquer our sin nature or else we will lose our salvation as soon as we gain it (2Corinthians 5:21)
Peace Offering	We find that through the cross of Christ He opened the way for true fellowship with God (1John 1:3)
Meat Offering	Through His obedient life, Christ shows us the way to be a living sacrifice for God (Rom.12:1)
Burnt Offering	We find the greatest blessing in being fully consumed in our commitment to God (Philippians 2:17)

The Burnt Offering:

The burnt offering is the first offering specified by name in the Bible. Noah offered burnt offerings when he left the ark (Gen.8:20). Abel's offering was certainly a burnt offering as well although it is not called such (Gen.4:4). The burnt offering is also the most common of the offerings mentioned in scripture and probably the most commonly offered. The table shows the five offerings in rank as to which of them are mentioned most in scripture.

Burnt Offering	197
Meat Offering	123
Sin Offering	119
Peace Offering	43
Trespass Offering	36

I. THE BRINGING OF THE BURNT OFFERING (1:1-3)

A. According to the Word of the Lord (v.1)

1. As a continuation of the earlier books of the law
 - a. Leviticus 1:1 – “And the Lord”
 - b. The conjunction, “And,” indicates a continuation
 - c. Leviticus is a continuation of the law of Moses
2. The Lord called unto Moses
 - a. The Lord spoke to Moses many times
 - (1) The seven-word verse, “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,” is found 72 times in the Bible; all in Exodus, Leviticus, or Numbers.
 - (2) Many other times a slightly different wording is used
 - b. However, the times that the Lord *called* unto Moses are limited
 - (1) The Lord called unto Moses out of the burning bush (Exodus 3:4) – this was the call of Moses to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt
 - (2) The Lord called unto Moses out of Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:3, 20) – this is on the occasion of the giving of the Ten Commandments
 - (3) The Lord called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud (Exodus 24:16) – this is when Moses entered the top of Mount Sinai in order to receive the remainder of the law
 - (4) The Lord called unto Moses out of the tabernacle of the congregation (Leviticus 1:1) – this is when the Lord gives the sacrificial system of atonement to Moses
3. God spoke to Moses out of the tabernacle of the congregation
 - a. This could not be done until the tabernacle was completed and set up according to the command of the Lord (Exodus 40:1-2, 16-17, 33-35)
 - b. It was through the tabernacle that the Lord dwelled among the children of Israel (Exodus 25:8; 29:44-45; Leviticus 26:11; Ezekiel 37:27-28; Revelation 21:3)
 - c. The Lord spoke to Moses from between the two cherubim that stood over the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:20-22; Numbers 7:89)

B. Unto the Lord (v.2)

1. They had to bring the offering to the place where God had chosen to put His name (Deuteronomy 12:5-6)
2. To bring their offering to the priests was to bring it to the Lord
3. The burnt offering was especially offered unto the Lord because all of it was burned to Him (Leviticus 22:18)

C. Of the Herd and of the Flock (v.2)

1. We are to bring of what we have (2Corinthians 8:12)
 - a. The word *cattle* is often used in scripture in a generic sense. When used this way, as here, it refers to cows, goats, and sheep (Genesis 1:24-25)
 - b. Of the herd and of the flock
 - (1) Herd of cows
 - (2) Flock of sheep or goats
2. Application: Christ came as a man; as one of us (Romans 8:3; Hebrews 2:14-18)

D. A Male (v.3)

1. Some offerings could be made with either male or female animals (Leviticus 3:1)
2. However, the burnt offering, which so clearly pictured the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, had to be a male; so also the Passover Lamb (Exodus 12:5)

E. Without Blemish (v.3)

1. A blemish is a mark that mars the appearance; any flaw, defect, or shortcoming
2. A blemish on the offering would make the offering unacceptable (Leviticus 22:19-21; Deuteronomy 15:21; 17:1)
3. Jesus Christ came as a Lamb without blemish (1Peter 1:19); this refers to His lack of sin or fault
 - a. He knew no sin (2Corinthians 5:21)
 - b. He was without sin (Hebrews 4:15)
 - c. He did not sin (1Peter 2:22)
 - d. No sin was in Him (1John 3:5)
 - e. But He bore the sins of many (Hebrews 9:28)
 - f. And He was made to be sin for us (2Corinthians 5:21)

F. Offered of His Own Voluntary Will (v.3)

1. This offering was made freely; not by compulsion (Exodus 35:5)
2. God wants us to offer ourselves voluntarily to Him (Romans 12:1; 2Corinthians 8:12)
3. Christ offered Himself voluntarily as a sacrifice (Psalm 40:8; John 10:17-18; Ephesians 5:2)

G. At the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation (v.3)

1. The door of the congregation was the closest to the presence of God that the common Israelite could come
2. The entrance of the door was covered with a hanging (Exodus 36:37)
 - a. Blue
 - b. Purple
 - c. Scarlet
 - d. Fine-twined linen [white]
3. The typology of the door
 - a. It was a place of consecration (Exodus 29:4, 9)
 - b. It was a place of hearing God's words (Exodus 29:42)
 - c. It was a place to seek God (Exodus 33:7-8)
 - d. It was a place of worship (Exodus 33:9-10)
 - e. It was a place of cleansing (Exodus 40:12)
 - f. It was a place of offering (Exodus 40:29)
 - g. It was a place of sacrifice (Leviticus 3:2)
 - h. It was a place of assembly (Leviticus 8:3)

II. THE BRINGING OF THE BURNT OFFERING (1:4-9)

A. The Offering was Presented (1:4)

1. The process of presentation
 - a. Identification
 - (1) The offerer identified with the offering
 - (2) By putting his hand on the head of the offering (see also Leviticus 3:2, 8, 13; 4:4, 24, 29, 33)
 - (3) The laying on of hands in the Bible usually meant the bestowing of something to another
 - a) Blessing (Genesis 48:14-15)
 - b) Sin (Leviticus 16:21)
 - c) Honor (Numbers 27:18-20; 1 Timothy 14-16)
 - (4) In Leviticus 1:4, the putting of the hand on the head of the offering was a bestowing of responsibility or guilt
 - a) The burnt offering was not dealing with specific sins that had been committed
 - b) The burnt offering was an indication that the offerer wanted to give himself to God and be acceptable unto Him
 - c) The laying on of the hand indicated a desire that the offering take the place of the offerer (see the same kind of transferal in Numbers 8:10-11, 14-18)
 - b. Imputation – Substitution
 - (1) The offering took the place of the offering

- (2) It was accepted in his place – “accepted for him”
 - (3) Because the imputation of God’s righteousness without the law is witnessed by the law and the prophets. (Romans 3:21-22)
 - a) By the law (Deuteronomy 7:6-9; 9:4-6)
 - b) By the prophets (Psalm 35:24; 71:1-3; 119:40; Isaiah 45:24-25; 54:17; 61:10; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Daniel 9:16)
 - c. Atonement
 - (1) The offering made atonement for the offerer
 - (2) The offerer received the benefit paid for by the offering
2. Notes on the atonement
- a. The words, *atonement* and *atonements*, are used 82 times in 70 verses in the Bible.
 - (1) 81 references in the Old Testament; 49 times in the book of Leviticus
 - (2) Only one reference in the New Testament: Romans 5:11
 - a) Romans 5:11 – “And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”
 - b) This refers to the fulfillment of the type
 - (3) The phrase “the atonement” is only used six times in the Bible.
 - a) The five uses in the Old Testament (Exodus 29:33; 30:16; Leviticus 16:32; Numbers 5:8; 2Samuel 21:3) all refer to a particular offering that was made.
 - b) The New Testament use (Romans 5:11) refers to the final and complete sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This atonement is the one through whom we have “now received” the final and fulfilling atonement.
 - b. Commonly used by Bible teachers and preachers in the sense of eternal salvation; this has led to much confusion in Bible study
 - (1) Atonement is required for some sorts of defilement – kinds of uncleanness that have nothing to do with personal sin
 - a) For the purifying of a woman who has brought forth a child (Leviticus 12:6-8)
 - b) For the leper who has recovered from his leprosy (Leviticus 14:18-21)
 - (2) Atonement is often applied to inanimate objects that are incapable of personal guilt or wrongdoing
 - a) The altar (Exodus 29:37; Leviticus 16:18-19)
 - b) A leprous house (Leviticus 14:52-53)
 - c) The tabernacle and holy place (Leviticus 16:16, 33)
 - (3) Atonement is made with various items
 - a) Most commonly with blood (Leviticus 17:11)
 - b) With money (Exodus 30:11-16)

- c) With an offering of incense (Numbers 16:46-48)
 - d) With the execution of members of the offending family (2Samuel 21:1-6)
- c. Atonement as Used in the Bible
- (1) The cleansing of defilement
 - a) The cleansing properties of atonement
 - i) The cleansing of the altar (Exodus 29:36)
 - ii) The cleansing of the woman who gave birth (Leviticus 12:8)
 - iii) The cleansing of the leper (Leviticus 14:19)
 - iv) The cleansing of sins (Leviticus 16:30)
 - b) Leads to the forgiveness of sins
 - i) Atonement was to be made for their sins (Exodus 32:30); this was not eternal salvation but the particular sin of making and worshipping the golden calf
 - ii) Atonement led to forgiveness of particular sins (Leviticus 4:20); compare to the forgiveness the Christian receives as per 1John 1:9
 - iii) Atonement for their souls required the offering of blood (Leviticus 17:11); this was a type of the coming sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:22)
 - (2) The covering of sin
 - a) Psalm 32:1 – “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”
 - b) Psalm 85:2 – “Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.”
 - c) Isaiah 30:1 – “Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:”
 - d) Ezekiel 21:24 – “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are discovered, so that in all your doings your sins do appear; because, I say, that ye are come to remembrance, ye shall be taken with the hand.” [This gives the opposite of atonement. Instead of being covered, the sins are **discovered**; that is, uncovered, so that they will appear before God.]
3. Purpose of Old Testament atonement – The sin and defilement are covered so that the holy God is not offended by their sins and so He can look upon them and fellowship with them. One of the major purposes of the law was to offer temporal purification for the Jews (Hebrews 9:13-14)

- a. Israel, as a nation, had a special relationship with God (Deuteronomy 4:7; 26:16-19; Psalm 147:19-20)
- b. God would meet with Israel and their priests in a special way (Exodus 25:21-22; 29:42-44; 30:6, 36; Numbers 17:4 [thou (singular)...you (plural)]; cp. Exodus 20:18-21; 33:7)
- c. God was to dwell among them (Exodus 25:8; 29:45-46; Leviticus 26:11-12)
- d. As such, there was a great danger of defiling God's tabernacle among them (Leviticus 15:31; Numbers 19:11-13, 20)
- e. This explains the special significance of the commands for Israel to be holy (Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:1-2)
- f. The sacrificial system allowed them to cleanse themselves from their filthiness so that God could continue to dwell among them (Leviticus 1:1-4; 4:35; 16:30; Hebrews 9:13-14)
- g. They needed the sacrifices so that God would "accept" them (Ezekiel 20:40-41; 43:27)

4. The offering of Christ

- a. Christ took our sins on His own head (Isaiah 53:4-6; 1Peter 2:24)
- b. His sacrifice was accepted for us (2Corinthians 5:21)

B. The Offering was Killed (1:5a)

- 1. It was killed by the one making the offering
 - a. The part of the offerer
 - (1) He determined to make the offering "of his own voluntary will" (v.3)
 - (2) He brought the offering to the door of the tabernacle (v.3)
 - (3) He laid his hand on the head of the offering (v.4)
 - (4) He killed the offering
 - b. As far as the law allowed, the offerer was identified with the offering. In bringing the burnt offering, he was in a sense bringing himself to the altar (Psalm 40:6-8; 51:16-17)
- 2. It was killed before the Lord
 - a. Practically, this meant that it was killed in front of the tabernacle, a place which represented the presence of the Lord
 - b. Symbolically, this meant that it was killed for the sake of the Lord in total surrender to Him

C. The Blood of the Offering was Sprinkled (1:5b)

- 1. A common practice under the law
 - a. To hallow or sanctify (Exodus 29:21; Leviticus 8:30)
 - b. To cleanse the impure (Leviticus 14:51-52; 16:19; Hebrews 9:13)
- 2. It was sprinkled by the priests; as mediators for the offerers

3. It was sprinkled on the burnt altar; to make the offering acceptable to the Lord
4. It is a type that was fulfilled by Jesus Christ (Hebrews 12:24; 1Peter 1:2)

D. The Offering was Prepared (1:6)

1. It was flayed; that is, the skin or hide was cut off (Micah 3:3)
 - a. The skin, being considered unclean, was not to be part of the burnt offering. It was to be removed before the offering was sacrificed.
 - b. The skin could be kept by the priests who made the offering (Leviticus 7:8)
 - c. A type of the believer putting off the flesh (Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 2:11; 3:9)
2. It was cut into pieces
 - a. Each part must be separate from the others
 - b. Each part must be sacrificed
 - c. A type of the systematic surrender of the believer unto the Lord. He may give himself entirely and whole unto the Lord. But then he finds that each part of his heart and life must be dealt with separately (Romans 12:1-2; Philippians 3:10).

E. The Altar was Prepared (1:7)

1. The priests put fire on the altar
 - a. A continual fire burned on the altar (Leviticus 6:12-13)
 - b. But the fire was built up for the particular offerings
 - c. God gives us trials sufficient for the offering we are ready to make (2Corinthians 4:10; 12:9-10)
2. The priests laid wood on the fire
 - a. The wood was laid in order
 - b. Every part of our trial is designed to accomplish its purpose
 - (1) It works together for good (Romans 8:28)
 - (2) It works the work of God (Romans 5:3-5; Hebrews 12:10-11)

F. The Offering was Placed on the Altar (1:8-9a)

1. The offering was laid on the wood in order (v.8)
 - a. The parts; a picture of the various areas of the persons life
 - b. The head; the mind and soul of the man
 - c. The fat; a picture of the pleasures and joys of life; these also must be given to the Lord in a complete sacrifice
2. Some parts were washed in water before being offered (v.9a); washing in water is a picture of the cleansing of the word of God (John 15:3; 17:17; Ephesians 5:26-27)
 - a. The inwards; a picture of the inward man, the heart
 - b. The legs; a picture of the works of man

G. The Offering was Consumed on the Altar (v.9b)

1. The entire offering was burned
2. It was a sweet savor unto the Lord
 - a. It was especially sweet unto the Lord
 - b. It was a complete sacrifice made willingly
3. NOTE: The first three offerings (burnt, meat, peace) and both voluntary offerings and they are a sweet savor unto the Lord. The last two offerings (sin, trespass) are required and are not called sweet savors to the Lord. It is evidently sweet to the Lord when we serve Him because of love and not because we must (see Eph.5:2; Phil.4:18; Heb.13:16).

III. THE SPECIFIC REGULATIONS OF THE BURNT OFFERING (1:10-17)

A. For Offerings of the Flocks (v.10-13)

1. Of sheep or goats (v.10)
2. A male without blemish (v.10)
3. Killed on the side of the altar (v.11)
 - a. Northward – in the sides of the north (Psalm 48:2; Isaiah 14:13)
 - b. Before the Lord
4. Blood sprinkled around about (v.11)
 - a. By the priests
 - b. On the altar
5. Cut into his pieces (v.12)
 - a. With his head
 - b. With his fat
6. Pieces laid on the altar (v.12)
 - a. In order
 - b. On the wood
 - c. On the fire
7. Wash the inwards and legs with water (v.13)
8. Bring it all (v.13; Romans 6:13; 1Corinthians 6:19-20; 2Corinthians 5:14-15)
9. Burn it on the altar (v.13)
 - a. As a burnt sacrifice – the complete sacrifice
 - b. As an offering made by fire – consumed in the fire (Malachi 3:3; 1Peter 1:7; 2Corinthians 4:10-12)
 - c. As a sweet savor to the Lord (Ephesians 5:1-2; 2Corinthians 2:15)

- B. For Offerings of Fowls (v.14-17)
1. Of turtledoves or young pigeons (v.14)
 - a. Completes the five acceptable animals for sacrifice (Genesis 15:9)
 - b. The offering of the poor (Leviticus 12:6-8; Luke 2:22-24)
 - c. No one unable to give unto the Lord
 2. Brought to the altar (v.15)
 3. Head to be wrung off (v.15)
 4. Blood wrung out at the side of the altar (v.15)
 5. Feathers to be plucked off (v.16)
 - a. Cast on the east side of the altar – away from the temple and the presence of the Lord.
 - b. By the place of the ashes – reserved until carried to a place outside the camp (Leviticus 6:9-11)
 - c. That which is unclean is kept from the presence of the Lord and removed
 6. Cutting of the bird (v.17)
 - a. He shall cleave it
 - (1) Cleave has two meanings in the English and in the Bible: to cut and to cling to. Context easily identifies which is which. Here, to cleave is certainly to cut (Deuteronomy 14:6; Psalm 141:7)
 - (2) The bird was to be cut
 - b. He shall not divide it asunder; but the bird was not to be cut into (Genesis 15:10)
 - c. Application: in a similar manner, the word of God is to be rightly divided (2Timothy 2:15). Divisions need to be made and understood. However, the Bible is not to be cut up in separate pieces that no longer have any connection.
 - d. Second application: we are to be separate from the world (“not of the world” – John 17:14, 16; 2Corinthians 6:14-18) but we are not to be totally divided from the world (“in the world” – John 17:11, 15; 1Corinthians 5:9-10). If we continue like the world, we cannot be a testimony to the world. If we are totally isolated from the world, we cannot tell them about our Saviour.
 7. Burnt on the altar (v.17)

CONCLUSION: The burnt offering was a complete sacrifice. In all the other offerings, others (usually only the priests) were allowed to eat certain portions of the offered animal. However, in the burnt offering, nothing was to be eaten by man. It was all to be consumed on the altar as a gift to God. We need to look at our sacrifice to God in the same way. We need to give ourselves entirely to Him. This is, after all, only our reasonable sacrifice (Rom.12:1).