

A PERSONAL  
VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY

LEVITICUS

BY  
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**Leviticus 1:1 ¶ And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying,**

It is important to note that the LORD called Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting—the Tabernacle. Moses conversed personally with the LORD on many occasions in a way that is not the norm. Moses is God’s chosen intermediary to provide instruction to His people. These instructions are to teach them how He expects them to maintain fellowship with Him. It is very important to note that God is establishing the acceptable standard. Man does not have an option as to what is acceptable to Him. The LORD is in the position of sovereign authority—just as He is today.

I know that the Bible should be viewed as not only a record of history, but also as “His Story,” a narrative that continually points toward the fulfillment of God’s plan as fulfilled in the person of Jesus, the Son of God, our redeemer. I will do my best throughout this study to look for Jesus.

**Leviticus 1:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, *even* of the herd, and of the flock.**

As I read through this first section, it is made clear from the beginning that these burnt offerings are to be made willingly—“If any man...” Verse two indicates that the offering should be from cattle or flock (sheep, goats, rams); however, we see at the end of the chapter that the offering could be a bird. These categories seem to take into consideration the different economic levels of the people.

**Leviticus 1:3 ¶ If his offering *be* a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD.**

**Leviticus 1:4 And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.**

This section of verses gives instruction regarding an offering from the herd. It is to be a male without blemish and (emphasized again) offered willingly. Already we have a picture of Christ. He came to earth to live as a man without sin to provide the acceptable sacrifice for man’s sin—and He did it willingly.

The person making the offering was to bring the bull to the door of the tabernacle and place his hand upon the head of the animal signifying that it was his sin that needed atoned—“covered, forgiven, purged” all from the Hebrew.

Though it has always been emphasized in most teaching I have heard that God only covered the sins of the people; I don’t really look at it in that way. I just recently read a good explanation of how righteousness was credited to Abraham’s account until Jesus verified the deposit much like a bank holds money on account for us. Until Jesus came and suffered the death of the cross and rose victorious from the grave, all sin was forgiven “on account,” but forgiven nonetheless. That Jesus would make good the deposit was never in

question. We are so privileged to be under grace and not under the law. Those under the law were responsible to maintain a right relationship with God through the sacrificial system according to His instructions. By grace through faith we are restored to fellowship with God once for all through the righteousness imputed to us by Jesus our Messiah.

*2 Corinthians 5:21 "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*

*Romans 3:21–22 "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:"*

**Leviticus 1:5 And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.**

**Leviticus 1:6 And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces.**

**Leviticus 1:7 And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire:**

**Leviticus 1:8 And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar:**

**Leviticus 1:9 But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.**

Once accepted, the person is to kill the bull before God. God had designated Aaron's sons to serve as priests for the people of Israel. The priests were to take the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkle it round about upon the altar by the door of the tabernacle. Scripture declares that the life is in the blood.

*Genesis 9:4 "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."*

This seems to picture that one is willingly laying his life on the altar before God as He makes this offering.

It sounds like the person making the offering is to skin the animal and cut it into pieces. Then the priests are to build a fire with wood on the altar and place the parts of the animal (including the head and the fat) on the wood over the fire. The organs and legs are to be washed in water and the priest is to burn everything on the altar as a burnt sacrifice. This sacrifice made by fire is described as a sweet smell unto the LORD; it pleases Him.

I think the fact that this offering is given for atonement of sin is the reason the whole animal must be consumed by the fire; it signifies complete purification and restored fellowship. I thought about the required participation of the one bringing the offering in light of how Jesus was bruised for our iniquities and our sins were laid on Him.

*Isaiah 53:5–6 “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”*

Why would the inwards and legs be washed with water? Again, I think it is to give a picture of the establishment of a pure relationship with God. It is our innermost being, our spirit, that needs cleansing, and once we receive that cleansing we are to “walk” in fellowship with God according to His will.

**Leviticus 1:10 ¶ And if his offering *be* of the flocks, *namely*, of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt sacrifice; he shall bring it a male without blemish.**

**Leviticus 1:11 And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar.**

**Leviticus 1:12 And he shall cut it into his pieces, with his head and his fat: and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that *is* on the fire which *is* upon the altar:**

**Leviticus 1:13 But he shall wash the inwards and the legs with water: and the priest shall bring *it* all, and burn *it* upon the altar: *it is* a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.**

This section provides the instructions for an offering from the flocks and is very similar to that for cattle. It, too, is to be a male without blemish, but it does not have to be skinned. When this animal is killed, it is specified that it be done on the north side of the altar. The Hebrew didn’t really reveal anything to me, but I found an interesting observation from Matthew Henry: “It was of old observed that *fair weather comes out of the north*, and that *the north wind drives away rain*; and by these sacrifices the storms of God’s wrath are scattered, and the light of God’s countenance is obtained, which is more pleasant than the brightest fairest weather.” That’s a nice application, but somehow I think I am missing something.

**Leviticus 1:14 And if the burnt sacrifice for his offering to the LORD *be* of fowls, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves, or of young pigeons.**

**Leviticus 1:15 And the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head, and burn *it* on the altar; and the blood thereof shall be wrung out at the side of the altar:**

**Leviticus 1:16 And he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers, and cast it beside the altar on the east part, by the place of the ashes:**

**Leviticus 1:17 And he shall cleave it with the wings thereof, *but* shall not divide *it* asunder: and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that *is* upon the fire: *it is* a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.**

This section details the instructions for those bringing a turtledove or young pigeon. The priest is to kill the offering by wringing off its head and burning it on the altar. The blood is to be drained out at the side of the altar, and its crop (food pouch) and feathers removed and thrown away on the east side of the altar

where the ashes are piled. He is to pull the bird apart by the wings, but not completely. The body is then to be burned on the wood on the altar as were the other animals specified as acceptable for this offering. Again it is noted that this offering is pleasing to the LORD—just as pleasing as the more valuable animals.

The stripping of the feathers reminds me of how they stripped the Lord Jesus before beating Him. Pulling the animal apart by the wings gives a picture of Jesus arms spread out on the cross.

In trying to find a reason for the designation east of the altar with the ashes, I noticed that the Hebrew for “east part” states “aforetime...everlasting.” It made me think about how the plan of God to provide for man’s sin was in place before creation and that His provision was to be everlasting—once for all.