

Gospel in Leviticus 1 of 6

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I'm so glad that as we read the Bible we are reading one message, although the Bible was written by many different scribes. One Spirit inspired all of it. It contains one message, the Gospel: the good news of salvation from sin.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

At the time that Paul wrote this he was thinking especially of the Old Testament Scriptures. In exalting these writings of the former prophets he was following the example of Jesus Christ.

Turn to Luke the 24th chapter. You remember that the day of His resurrection Christ was walking with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They not recognizing who He was, told Him of their sorrow and disappointment at seeing their leader dead. They did not know that He'd been raised from the dead. They did not know that He Himself was walking close beside them. But Christ had a purpose in thus appearing to them without knowing who he was. He wanted to establish their faith in the Old Testament Scriptures as foretelling His coming. And so, He said:

“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself”
Luke 24:27.

Why did He begin at Moses? There was no place further back to begin. Moses was the author of the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Beginning at Moses Christ showed the prophecies that found their fulfillment in Himself.

Tonight we're beginning a series on the Gospel in the book of Leviticus. It would have been wonderful to hear Christ go through the Old Testament types. Notice:

“And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me” Luke 24:44.

So as we study the Gospel in Leviticus we’re following in these steps, echoing the lessons of Jesus our Lord.

Let’s turn to the first chapter of Leviticus. This series will not be a verse by verse study of this book; but rather it will be glimpses of a few of the many precious Gospel lessons taught in this wonderful volume. It’s called Leviticus because it deals with the Levitical law, the law of the priests and Levities, the law of the types and shadows and the offerings and sacrifices of the ancient tabernacle.

Paul makes it very plain in Hebrews that the earthly sanctuary was a type or shadow of the heavenly. He states this in Hebrews 8:1-5. So when we’re studying these ancient sacrifices we’re thinking particularly of these not merely historical facts, we’re thinking of them as examples of the sacrifice and priestly work of Jesus. It’s very plain both in the type and the anti-type that the great work of the sanctuary with all its sacrifices and offerings was the work of dealing with the sin problem. It’s made plain that only by the shedding of blood can there be remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22). It’s made plain that to deal effectually with sin requires the work of a sacrifice, a substitute, and also the work of a priest. Jesus is both. He’s the Lamb who dies for us. He is the Priest who lives for us. And as we are going study the Gospel in Leviticus we need to be familiar with those facts.

The offering which is covered in the first chapter of Leviticus is the burnt offering. There were many sacrifices and offerings in the Levitical law. The books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, all present different features of these. But keep in mind that all these different offerings found their complete anti-type in the one offering of the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary. They had many offerings, He’s the one offering; and why many offerings? Because there’re many aspects that we need to consider.

The sacrifice of Christ involves more than one thing; and every offering of the Levitical law has a precious lesson concerning the sacrifice of Jesus. No finite offering could fully present that infinite sacrifice of Jesus. So as the offerings were multiplied, each offering had its specific lesson to teach.

Tonight we’re looking at the burnt offering. Now, it’s called the whole burnt offering, because the entire animal was used in the sacrifice. As we shall see, as we proceed from Friday night to Friday night, some offerings only parts of some animals were used. But in the whole burnt offering the entire animal was used. This has precious lessons.

“And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of

the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, 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” Leviticus 1:1-2.

The burnt offering could be brought either from the cattle or from the herd—a bullock or a sheep or a goat. As you will note in the 14th verse, even a fowls offerings could be brought: turtledoves or young pigeons. So provision was made for all. Those who could afford an animal of great value could bring that. Those who were poor could bring one that was not of so much value; and those where so poor that they couldn't afford either of these could bring an offering of young pigeons or turtledoves. You remember that in the offering that Joseph and Mary brought at the time of the dedication of Christ at the temple, that they were so poor that they brought two turtledoves. What a thing to contemplate: the One who made all these laws and rituals, when He Himself was presented in the temple His earthly guardians could afford only the poorest. He must have been thinking of this when in the Levitical law He made a provision.

Dear friends, this has a precious lesson for you and me that God values our offerings, whether they come from poverty or from riches. Jesus, you remember, commended the widow who gave the two mites, less than a penny in value of our money. He looks to see the willing heart. You notice that this offering in the third verse it says:

“...he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD” Leviticus 1:3.

God does not wish a forced offering. He loves a cheerful giver. And the offering that is given of our own voluntary will is acceptable. As Paul puts it:

“For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not” 2 Corinthians 8:12.

We should never fear to bring our offerings because they're small. If they're the best we have God accepts them just as much as a million dollars from a man who could afford such an offering.

In all these sacrifices, let us keep in mind, as we think of the man bringing them, what the purpose of it was. There was a double application. That lamb or that bullock represented Christ, our substitute. It also represented the man himself; he was to participate in the experiences. We shall see the spiritual lessons presently.

“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”

Leviticus 1:4.

Notice the steps. He brings the animal to the door of the tabernacle there by the altar; in fact the 11th verse says it was on the north side of the altar. He placed his hand upon it to be accepted for him. In other words he was saying: This animal represents me. This is my substitute. And looking by faith to the future he saw the Lamb of God who was to be sacrificed and be our substitute.

Is Jesus our substitute? Is He accepted for us? Isn't it a wonderful thing to know that we have a substitute in Jesus, to recognize Him as the One who takes our place? He was wounded for our transgressions.

In carrying out this type, the bullock was killed. The man who laid his hand upon the bullock in the fourth verse; in the fifth verse it says:

“And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD...” Leviticus 1:5.

Then the priests were to take the blood and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle. This was the altar of burnt offering. So after the animal had been slain, and the priest took the blood and sprinkled it round about upon the altar, the sixth verse:

“And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces. And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire” Leviticus 1:6-7.

Notice that expression “in order.” All things in God's work are to be done as Paul says:

“...decently and in order” 1 Corinthians 14:40.

They didn't just throw the wood up there on the altar. They laid it in order. Again in the eighth verse something else was to be done in an orderly way:

“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 1:8.

The wood was placed in order, and then the sacrifice which had been cut in pieces was placed in order upon the wood. The ninth verse:

“But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water...”

Leviticus 1:9.

Even though the animal was all to be consumed, some parts were to be washed in water. This has significance, of course, in the washing that the New Testament speaks of—the washing of water by the word (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Now notice in the ninth verse, after the animal had been slain, and after it had been cut up into pieces, placed upon the wood in order, the sacrifice placed in order, then it says the priest shall burn all on the altar to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire of a sweet savor unto the Lord. How could such a sacrifice be spoken of as a sweet savor to the Lord? Simply this, my friends there're two things that make our heavenly Father glad. One is the wonderful fact that His Dear Son has made a sacrifice for our atonement. God loves us so much that it makes Him happy that His Son has been willing to place His life as our substitute. He loves us so much that anything which will make possible our salvation is sweet and precious to Him.

But there is another part to this lesson we want to be sure to get. As that animal represented Christ, the man's substitute, it also represented the man himself. This is shown by the fact that he placed his hand upon it, it was accepted for him. How can the same animal represent Christ as our substitute and yet represent us? It's perhaps even more clear in the anti-type. Notice. I am thankful for the Old Testament, and I am thankful for the New Testament. I am thankful for the wonderful illumination of the Old Testament types as we study the New Testament Gospel. Galatians 2:20, what's the first word?

“I am crucified with Christ... “ Galatians 2:20.

So the cross is not only the place where Jesus died for me. The cross is the place where I die with Him. And just as the Devil seeks to hide the sacrifice of Christ lest we get the blessing of His atonement, so he seeks to hide that cross from you and me lest we miss the blessing of complete sacrifice. So we see the double lesson of the burnt offering. It represents the full sacrifice of Jesus sacrificed on Calvary. It also represents the complete dedication or consecration of our lives to Jesus. Let's take a few texts on this. See what meaning this text has in light of what we've just studied about the burnt offering of Leviticus 1:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,
that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable
unto God, which is your reasonable service” Romans 12:1.

What a picture! That sacrifice was slain, divided into its parts, and consumed upon the altar; which you and I, Paul says, are to bring our bodies and present them to God as what? A living sacrifice. Most of us, God does not call us to be martyrs. He wants us to be living witnesses. He wants our lives to be laid down in sacrifice not in death but in life;

not in martyrdom but in service. You know in some ways dear friends, it requires more dedication sometimes to be a living sacrifice than a dying sacrifice. A man may in a moment of response, a moment of enthusiastic surrender to Christ, be willing to die for Him. But oh, to day by day, year by year continue in that dedication that consecration; this is what makes the Master happy.

I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies and living sacrifice. You remember there in Leviticus 1, the man of his own voluntary will brought the lamb or the bullock. So we voluntarily bring our bodies and “present them to God a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Is it reasonable? He gave everything for us. We give everything for Him. Notice in Ephesians the fifth chapter what it says about the sacrifice of Christ, in fulfilling this type of the whole burnt offering, we’ll read the first verse with it:

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” Ephesians 5:1-2.

You remember it says there in Leviticus 1, that the burnt offering represented something acceptable to God, a sweet savour. This is the offering of Christ. And while it brought pain to the Father's heart to see His Son sacrificed, it brought joy to His heart to know that as a result you and I could be saved in the kingdom of God. So Christ's offering, the whole burnt offering is a sweet savour to God. Now Paul says, I want you to walk in those footsteps. I want you to share that experience.

Notice, back there in Leviticus the first chapter, what kind of offerings they were to bring. Let's turn and take a look—not just anything, it was to be the very best they could find. Leviticus the 1:3: “without blemish.” Again, in the 10th verse, the last two words, what are they? *without blemish*. Nothing that had a blemish could be accepted for this whole burnt offering. What does this mean? Concerning Jesus, Peter says:

“... ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold... But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”
1 Peter 1:18-19.

Was Jesus perfect? Was it a perfect offering that was accepted in our behalf? Therefore, don't miss it, they were required to select as the animal representing Jesus that which was without blemish. It was to be from the very best that they had. Now if you and I are to share in that consecration, that dedication, what should we bring to God? Oh, we should endeavor to bring to God an offering without blemish. If all we have is a body that's been polluted with nicotine and alcohol and a hundred other things, let's quit poisoning the

body anymore, and ask God to heal us as fast as possible. And whatever our health habits or lack of them that has caused us to be weak and inefficient, we would pray the Lord to help us make our offering as nearly without blemish as possible—what do you say?

Here is an angle on health reform that is beautiful. It isn't merely to preserve our own health or to keep us from pain. It's that we may bring to God an offering without blemish. That means that when we eat at the table we should select the very best food. We're to exercise. We're to rest. We're to trust—all for the purpose of bringing to God the very best offering possible. And He loves to have us do that.

Now let's turn to Exodus the 29th chapter, I want you to see something very interesting here. Exodus 29:38. That which we have read this evening from Leviticus 1 concerns the voluntary offering by an individual for the burnt offering from time to time. But what we're about to look at in Exodus is the morning and evening burnt offering which was offered for the nation everyday. Everyday, continually, that burnt offering was kept up. Day, by day continually upon the altar, this offering in the morning a lamb was put on; Again in the evening another lamb. So it was always burning on the altar—an offering of continual sacrifice, of continual atonement. In this we have an example for morning and evening prayer. You remember that beautiful statement from Steps to Christ:

“Consecrate yourselves to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, ‘Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine.’ *Steps to Christ*, page 70.

That's the great lesson of the burnt offering—complete dedication the whole offering.

I was interested in the statement that they were to cut it up into pieces and lay it upon the altar in order. I think sometimes there might be a blessing to some of us in being very practical and very concrete about making this a dedication of ourselves. I was thinking about the eye. I wonder if there's anyone here tonight that could get a blessing by offering your eyes to God as a willing sacrifice upon the altar. What's the eye for? Look, turn to the 119th Psalm, two wonderful verses here about the eye. The eye is the great organ through which impressions are made upon the mind.

“Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law” Psalm 119:18.

If we'll give our eyes to God, God will help us to see what? Wondrous things. Now there's another prayer in this same chapter, the first 7 words of this 37th verse have to do with the eyes too. Will you read them with me?

“Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity...” Psalm 119:37.

Can you look in two directions at the same time? No. Just now I’m looking south, but you’re looking north. If I should ask you to see what I see you’d have to turn around. So if you and I will ask God to take our eyes, place them on His altar, He’ll help us to turn our attention heavenward and see wondrous things out of His law. But in order to do that we’ll have to turn away from beholding vanity.

What is vanity? Worthless things—not worth the time; there are plenty around. Do any of you know of an instrument that has something you can turn? Oh, I’m so glad that everyone of those boxes has a place where you can turn it off.

In our sanctuary series out west I’ve been using this verse helping our people to learn this prayer. Will you repeat it with me again? “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.” What’s the first letter of the first word in that prayer? T. What’s the first letter in the last word in that prayer? V. I’ve been challenging our folks to copy off this prayer in good big letters and put it close to their TV. And I believe some of them are going to do it, dear friends.

Are there a few things on some TV programs that would help us to behold wondrous things out of God’s law? I thank God for the *It is Written* program that my dear friend George Vandeman is giving; and millions will view it. But you and I know that most of what’s coming over the air waves is vanity—isn’t it? It’s garbage or worse. Thank God for the privilege of placing our eyes on the altar. I’m using this as an illustration. Every part of our body needs to be fully consecrated, fully dedicated to Jesus. This is the lesson of the burnt offering.

Turn to Isaiah the 33rd chapter. Let’s get a view of the people who are doing this. Oh, I think this is wonderful! Notice the use of the eyes here—turning away from some things, and the beholding other things:

“The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the king in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off” Isaiah 33:14-17.

Is it true that these eyes shall one day see Jesus? Praise the Lord. But the eyes that see Him and welcome Him with joy will be the eyes that have been shut to the violence and the crime the filth and the immorality of this wicked world. We can have one or the other. There's no way to have both. I'm glad it is so, aren't you? There's no way to enjoy both at the same time. We either weep with Jesus over sin—and thus learn to have eternal joy with Him, or else we find our fun in wickedness and cause Jesus to suffer.

Now turn to the 118th Psalm—a very interesting text. I mentioned the eye only as an illustration—what about our hands? Shall we put our hands on the altar? Oh, what an instrument the hand is. What a great blessing. Think of those hands playing the organ or the piano, or any other musical instrument. Does it make a difference whether that hand is on the altar with Jesus? What kind of music comes from the piano, the organ or the guitar? What about what's written on the typewriter. The hand that is on the altar will write the words that Jesus once has written. What about that hand ministering to the sick; feeling the pulse, administering treatment, washing the feet as Jesus did in the upper room; using the towel in loving service; washing the dishes; hoeing the corn. Any one of ten thousand forms of service. What a wonderful thing to have our hands on the altar with Jesus. What do you say?

What about our feet? Shall we put them on the altar? "Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee." How beautiful upon the Mountain are the feet of him that brings good tidings that publish of peace. But now notice Psalm 118:27:

"God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar" Psalm 118:27.

A dead sacrifice will probably stay there, but a living sacrifice has a tendency sometimes to want to do what? Get off the altar. Did you ever give yourself to God, make a decision to make a full consecration to Him and then find that the fire was hotter than you thought, and you wanted to get out, and get down? Can you do it? Oh, bind the sacrifice with cords even unto the horns of the altar. And what those cords are, the cords of love. The more we love Jesus the more we want to be where He is. And Jesus, our best friend is still on the altar. He's represented by that morning and evening sacrifice, the continual burnt offering. He put His life on the altar when sin began. And in a sense He'll be there, a very real and living sense, until His people have shared with Him in the sacrifice long enough to be cured of sin. Then He can close the sanctuary and come and take us home.

Where is your life my dear friends tonight? Have you accepted Jesus as your substitute and surety? Is He your whole burnt offering? Do you know that it's through His righteousness that you are accepted? And have you shared with Him in the dedication? We have so little to give, He had everything to give.

But never forget. Jesus didn't give up a lot of bad things so He could be saved. He

gave up all the good things so we could be saved. And when we get that vision, when we get that picture we won't try to get all we can out of this world and still go to heaven at last. But rather we will seek to place our lives on the altar with Jesus in dedication, not only giving to Him the bad things, but giving to Him everything so that we can share His ministry of sacrifice, and join with Him in loving service for others.

Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid?
Your heart does the Spirit control?
You can only be blessed
And have peace and sweet rest
As you yield Him, your body and soul.

(Appeal)

Will the congregation kneel with us as we pray? Our precious Lord, we thank Thee with all our hearts that Thou hast spoken to us through Thy word, by Thy good Spirit.

And tonight we bring our offering—the Lord Jesus Christ. We have nothing of ourselves to present, except our weakness, and our great need. But oh, we thank Thee that the Sinless One has taken our place and that as we accept Him, and He accepts us.

We thank Thee for our Substitute, even Jesus. We thank Thee, that as we lay our hands upon that dear head, He accepts us as we transfer to Him all our needs, our liabilities.

And tonight, our Father we've come not merely to share the benefits of His sacrifice; we come to share the consecration of our lives to Him. We've come to share that life on the altar.

Bind the sacrifice with cords my Lord to the horns of the altar with the cords of love so confine us, that we shall not rush back in selfish paths. I pray especially for these who have been lead by Thy Spirit to respond by standing. Thou knowest what Thou hast talked to their hearts about. Make them glad as they give everything to Jesus. And with them Lord, take all of us, to be fully surrendered wholly Thine—all thine forevermore in Jesus' name, Amen.

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