

## OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES/OFFERINGS

Leviticus begins, *“Then the Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting”* (Leviticus 1:1). The Tabernacle has already been set up (Exodus 40:33-38). The Tabernacle now became God’s dwelling place. He retired within the veil which is a type of Christ’s flesh (Hebrews 10:20) and took His place on the mercy seat where the blood of atonement was that which met His view and satisfied the claims of His nature (His holiness). The blood which was brought into the sanctuary by the high priest was the type of that precious blood which cleanses from all sin; and although Israel saw nothing of this, it nevertheless justified God in dwelling among them. God is holy no matter from where He speaks but here His perfect holiness is combined with His perfect grace. Here we see His work not in the bringing of His people out of Egypt - not in redeeming them - but in bringing them into the place of worship and in keeping them there in happy fellowship and in restoring them when they fail or fall.

There are five offerings described. All the offerings together give us a full view of Christ. No one type could fully present Him. They are like so many mirrors arranged in such a manner as to reflect the figure of that true and only perfect Sacrifice in various ways. He is reflected in life and death, as a Man and as a victim, to God-ward and to us-ward; thus is He presented in the offerings in Leviticus. Through them definite views of the details of Christ’s work are given. But for them we should never fully, or at least so fully, apprehend Him.

In each offering there are at least three distinct objects presented to us: the offering, the priest, and the offerer. Christ is the offering, Christ is the priest, and Christ is the offerer. These show the relations in which Christ has stood to man and for man. As offerer we see Him man under the law, standing as our substituted; as Priest we have Him presented as mediator, God’s messenger between Himself and Israel; as the offering He is seen the innocent victim, a sweet savor to God, yet bearing the sin and dying for it.

The offerings set forth Christ. We see in them how man in Christ has made atonement. We look at the sin and trespass offering and see that the sin of man has been fully borne. We look at the burnt and meal offerings and we see all God’s requirements satisfied. This is our confidence - *“For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified”* (Hebrews 10:14).

But there is also another aspect of this truth. We are one with Christ, therefore we should walk even as He walked. In this view His offering, as our example, sets before us the model and standard of our self-sacrifice. Just as His sacrifice had varied aspects, so will our self-sacrifice, as it is conformed to His, have these same aspects. It is in this secondary sense that the offerings have an application to Christians. Thus we also are offerers and our bodies offerings (Romans 12:1). There is in His pure offering that which will find no counterpart in us. Yet, the Christian’s self-sacrifice may fail in many ways, but his rule is the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.

## **BURNT OFFERING**

Leviticus 1; 6:8-13; 8:18-21; 16-24

Bull, ram or male bird (dove or young pigeon for the poor); wholly consumed; no defect

Voluntary act of worship; atonement for unintentional sin in general; expression of devotion, commitment and complete surrender to God. This was man satisfying God; man in Christ giving himself to God as His portion. This sacrifice was fulfilled for us in Christ. The Burnt Offering shows how we should "yield ourselves" (Romans 6:13). It was wholly burnt. No part was withheld from God. Conformity to Christ involves entire self-surrender (2 Samuel 24:24). The burnt offering is still costly. The burnt offering was God's claim. The fulfillment of this required the life of Christ. It will demand our lives as we walk with Him. Christ felt His sacrifice and so shall we if we offer with Him. Just as it was His joy to give Himself, so must it be in us (Psalm 11:8).

## **GRAIN OFFERING**

Leviticus 12; 6:14-23

Grain, fine flour; olive oil, incense, baked bread (cakes or wafers), salt; no yeast or honey; accompanied burnt offering and peace offering (along with drink offering)

Voluntary act of worship; recognition of God's goodness and provisions; devotion to God. Christ offered Himself as the fruit of the earth (incarnate Son of Man). In doing this He gave Himself to God, yet with special reference to man, and as meeting man's claim on Him. Man had a claim upon man; God had ratified the claim in "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*" In this offering Christ gave Himself to God as man's portion. The grain offering was consumed in its entirety. Such is our standard. The meat offering is also costly (Philippians 3:8). Paul said, "Even if I am poured out..." (Philippians 2:17); he refers here to the drink offering which was offered as an adjunct to the grain offering (Numbers 15:1-12; Philemon 7). Self-sacrifice is still reproved even by those who follow Christ (Matthew 26:7,10ff).

## **PEACE / FELLOWSHIP OFFERING**

Leviticus 3; 7:11-34

Any animal without defect from herd or flock; variety of breads

Voluntary act of worship; thanksgiving and fellowship (it included a communal meal). The offering which showed us the offerer fed. The offerer with the priest and with God partook of and found satisfaction in the same offering. Can our poor offerings yield satisfaction to ourselves, to Christ, and to God (Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 9:7; 8:5; Philippians 4:18; Hebrews 13:16)? Thus God is satisfied. Does our Priest find joy in our offering (Matthew 25:35,40)? How is the offerer satisfied (Acts 20:24; Philippians 2:17; Colossians 1:24)? The very costliness of the sacrifice increase our joy when we know that He rejoices with us.

## **SIN OFFERING**

Leviticus 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30; 8:14-17; 16:3-22

1) Young bull: for high priest and congregation;  
2) Male goat: for leader;  
3) Female goat or lamb for common person;  
4) Turtledove or pigeon: for the poor;  
5) Tenth of and ephah of fine flour: for the very poor

Mandatory atonement for specific unintentional sin; confession of sin; forgiveness of sin; cleansing from defilement. This was the offering in which the victim bore sin and died for it. Christ's death in the flesh for sin is our example (Romans 6:6; 1 Corinthians 11:31; Galatians 5:24; 1 Peter 4:1).

## **GUILT OFFERING**

Leviticus 5:14-6:7; 7:1-6

Ram or lamb

Mandatory atonement for unintentional sin requiring restitution; cleansing from defilement; make restitution; pay 20% fine. Here is restitution made for wrong; the original claim with the added fifth was paid. Christ standing for man makes restitution for man's wrong (1 Peter 1:18,19). If Christ had not made it, we are lost; but again He is our example. We are called not only to be just, but to be gracious (Matthew 5:38-44; Mark 11:25,26; Luke 6:32-35).

When more than one kind of offering was presented (as in Numbers 7:16,17), the procedure was usually as follows: (1) sin offering or guilt offering, (2) burnt offering, (3) peace offering and grain offering (along with drink offering). This sequence furnishes part of the spiritual significance of the sacrificial system. First, sin had to be dealt with (sin offering or guilt offering). Second, the worshipper committed himself or herself completely to God (burnt offering and grain offering). Third, fellowship or communion between the Lord, the priest and the worshipper (peace offering) was established. To state it another way, there were sacrifices of expiation (sin offerings and guilt offerings), consecration (burnt offerings and grain offerings) and communion (peace offerings - these include vow offerings, thank offerings and freewill offerings).