

“Our LORD & Ritual Ceremonies”

Leviticus ch.1-7

February 11, 2018

VIDEO: “Holiness”

INTRO: Welcome... to THE BRIDGE where both **Hope** & **Holiness** are championed in-Christ... and after today, I pray you’ll know why... AND **come join us!**

➤ Preview

1. *Defining Relationships*
2. *Detailed Rituals*
3. *Disciples Remembering*

➤ Review

1. Relationship between **holiness & hope**
 - Over **50X** in Leviticus...
 - **19:2**... *“BE holy for I your Lord am holy”*
2. Relationship between *“Our Lord & His Law”*
3. Relationship between *“Our Lord & Leviticus”*
4. Relationship between Hebrews & Leviticus
 - 1st verse & (56X) in Lev. “the Lord spoke

*¹ Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.... **Hebrews 1:1-3***

BIG IDEA: Relational definitions define ritual details...
God's holiness, help & heart reveal
His Word, His will & His ways

I. Defining RELATIONSHIPS (cont.)

- a. God's Holiness
- b. God's Covenants (VIDEO)
- c. God's Sacrifice & Atonement (VIDEO)

II. Detailed RITUALS

➤ Review:

1. Law is NOT a list of rules... but relational love
2. Lev. is gracious solution to sin & separation
 - Rituals are 1 of 3 means of restoration...
 - Everything is pointing to our Redeemer!

➤ Don't miss the details, details, details...

1. God calls for exacting obedience!
2. The divine is in the details! – JDP
3. *Faithful obedience is at the heart of reverence!*

➤ Leviticus 1-7 = 5 core ceremonial rituals/offerings

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| 1. (Complete) Burnt | Offering |
| 2. Grain/Meal | Offering |
| 3. Peace/Fellowship | Offering |
| 4. Sin/Purification | Offering |
| 5. Guilt/Restitution | Offering |

- We're going to look at these as yet another arch
 1. *Thank-You!* (Burnt & Grain)
 2. *Please...* (Sin & Guilt)
 3. *Never-forget!* (Peace/Fellowship)
- See how once again everything leads to relationship

A. *Thank-You:* (Complete **Burnt** Offering)

- A physical process for a spiritual purpose!
- ...because sin leads to death – every time!
- Lev. 1:4 defines purpose: *“to make atonement”*
 1. *Atonement* = **53X** in Lev. vs. **43** in rest of O.T.
 2. *At-one-ment* = reconciliation or *“ransom”*
- Placing hands on head connected sinner/sacrifice
 1. There must be a genuine, heartfelt relationship
 2. Ritual without relationship is rubbish! – JDP
 3. *God's love is seen in His offer of atonement!*
- Don't miss the obvious...
 1. God was providing a **graphic, GORY, vivid demonstration** of both, *sin's cost & remedy*
 2. *Leviticus is preparing us for the cross!* – JDP
 - Where Jesus gave ALL of Himself...
 - Where Christians are to pick up & follow!

B. *Please...* (**Guilt/Restoration** Offering)

- We underestimate God's perfect holiness... & then try to reduce our sense of guilt by redefining sin

- We must come to realize our need for forgiveness & then faithfully obey: (see Martin Luther below...)

When the law oppresses you so that everything seems utterly desperate and thus drives you to Christ for help, then the law is performing its true function. This is the best and most perfect use of the law. . . . It's true function, then, is to show us our sins, to make us guilty, to humble us, to kill us, to bring us down to hell, and finally to take away all help & all comfort... Yet, this is entirely in order that we may be justified, exalted, brought to life, carried up into heaven, and obtain everything good. Therefore, the law does not just kill, but it kills in order that we may live (and BE perpetually sanctified).

- Repentance + **RESTITUTION** (+20%) = Restoration!
 1. 2 Cor. 7 = “worldly” vs. “godly” grief...
 2. Remorse & repentance are 2 different things!
 3. *“Produce fruit consistent with repentance”* J.B.
 4. 2 Cor. 5:19 = Jesus is Christian’s restitution!

C. *Thank-You:* (**Grain/“Gratitude”** Offering)

- Both the burnt & grain offerings had to be of the BEST quality, both were offered by fire, & resulted in a pleasing aroma to the Lord,
- Christians are the *“aroma of Christ”* (2 Cor. 2:14ff)
- The grain offering = **gratitude & worship**.
- See Jesus & His joy in **Hebrews 12:1-2!!!**
- **God allowed no yeast/leaven... (corruption)**
- See again the God’s words in 1st John 2&3...

D. *Please...* (Sin/Purification Offering)

- Only 4 chapters in the Bible have no sin in them...

Sin is powerful. Never think that sin is passive; it's an active force in our lives. We don't sin & then just return to where we were spiritually. Sin is a set-back; it affects us. It takes us farther than we want to go, & it costs more than we want to pay.

We live in a culture where the subject of sin is unpopular. In many circles, the word sin just sounds (old) and out of place... Consequently, we're bombarded with challenges to stop categorizing behavior as right or wrong but to celebrate every form of behavior as neutral, personal choices (in the name of Christianity). Tragically, countless churches rarely, if ever, use the word "sin" anymore. They talk about love and grace but talking about sin is avoided because it upsets people, and some think it lowers self-esteem. However, to be sure, to ignore sin is to ignore the God's Word.

- **Romans 3:23 & 6:23** must be dealt with!
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- The sacrificial system is God's invitation for people to meet with Him.
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- Praise God! *HE has made a way to deal with sin!*
 1. Lev 4, the Sin offering, & the gospel all agree
 2. Forgiveness is available for ALL!
 3. **Hebrews 9:26** *"He (Jesus) has appeared one time, at the end of the ages, for the removal of sin by the sacrifice of Himself."*

Jesus wasn't just the next step in God's plan. He was always God's plan, and He is the final, once-for-all sacrifice for sin.

- Jesus satisfied the wrath of God against the elect
- **1 John 4:10** "*Jesus is our propitiation*" (cf. Col 2:13-14)
- BUT... Jesus requires righteous repentance
- NOTE... the sin offering was a *visual confession*

T/S: When we miraculously give "thanks" for grace & say "please" in pleading for mercy, then, & only then, will **we never forget** how & why *we have peace & fellowship with our Lord!*

III. Disciples REMEMBERING

T/S: Let's take a closer look at this ritual & it's reminder...

E. *Never Forget!* (Peace/Fellowship Offering)

ILLUSTRATION: 1946 Joshua Liebman book... *Peace of Mind*. It was number one on the *New York Times* Best Seller list for 58 weeks, and top 10 for over three straight years... died @ 41

*Leviticus ch.3 offers a principled portrait of one of the most sought after & tragically elusive treasures in all the world....
Peace & fellowship with the One true & living God!*

Here's the spiritual irony... Peace with God begins when we realize we don't have it and that we really need it.

- You've got to **BELIEVE** Romans 5:10 (*enemies*)
- You've got to **BE-come** Romans 12:1

“By the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship.”

Once sin was atoned for and the worshiper had expressed dedication to God in worship, he or she was ready to enjoy fellowship with God. The order is significant.

What a great blessing the fellowship offering was!

Celebrated that worshiper's relationships w/ God were OK.

- Peace/Fellowship offering has become Communion
 1. Remember the **affects** of sin & separation...
 2. Remember the **cost** to Christ for our adoption!
 3. The Gospel is BOTH **gruesome** & **gracious**...

COMMUNION: (please distribute the elements & REMEMBER)

VIDEO: *“You Paid It All”*

- Worshippers ate & celebrated & in O.T. “koinonia”
 1. Think about all the Bible's *“one anothers”*
 2. Now put it into the context of **John 17**
- Partake: *“Do this in remembrance of Me.”*

CLOSE:

- Remember... restoration is ALL of GRACE!
 1. The Lord lit the fire on the altar... (9:24)
 2. It was to “*kept burning*”
 - Shows dependence upon God
 - Reminds of God’s presence (Mt. 28:20)
 - Allows for atonement at all times

Hebrews 7:25

Jesus “is always able to save those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them.”

Let’s Pray!

ALWAYS remember:

1. BOTH how gruesome AND gracious the gospel really is!
You are blood-bought & blood-washed Christian!
2. Relational definitions define ritual details!
Holy rituals mean nothing without holy relationships!
3. ALL of this is to enlarge God’s glory & extend God’s grace thru the truth in love of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Remember...

The Gospel is divine alter-call... Jesus died that you might live!

VIDEO: “O Come To The Alter”

Research Notes:

1. (Complete) Burnt Offerings
 - a. Priestly procedural/principled instructions 6:8-13

2. Grain/Meal Offerings (see 2:13! *SALT* is always required!)
 - a. Priestly procedural/principled instructions 6:9-18

3. Peace/Fellowship Offerings (cf. 3:2, 8, 13 - gruesome cost of peace!)
 - a. Priestly procedural/principled instruction 7:11-18

4. Sin/Purification Offerings
 - a. Priestly procedural/principled instruction 6:24-30
 - b. Only “unintentional sins” are atoned for here...
 - i. When “anointed priests” sin.... (v.3)
 1. “Sin has no prejudice.” - JDP
 2. Repentance is required by all...
 3. Mercy is “one size fits all.” - JDP
 - a. Mercy is the forgotten grace! – JDP
 - b. Grace is mercy’s muscle! - JDP
 - ii. When the “whole congregation” sins... (v.13)
 - iii. When “a leader” sins... (v.22)
 1. See unique wording... (v.26)
 2. “...the priest shall make atonement for him for his sins, and he shall be forgiven”
 - iv. When “any of the common people” sin (v.27)

1. Odd distinction... “female” offering used
 2. See repeated words of v.26 in v.31...
 3. “...the priest shall make atonement for him for his sins, and he shall be forgiven”
- c. See how the blood ceremony is now inside the tent
 - d. Interesting “specificity” of finger-dip & 7 sprinkles
 - i. Dip & sprinkle now...
 - ii. Throw & splash previously...
 - e. See critical sequence: 5:5-6 (still in “Sin Offering”)
 - i. Realize
 - ii. Confess
 - iii. Obey (offer righteous sacrifice)
 - f. See critical principle: 5:7ff
 - i. EVERY-one who sins unintentionally is to offer a sin sacrifice...
 - ii. The LORD customizes the offering required based on what each person can “afford”

5. Guilt/Restitution Offerings

- a. Priestly procedural/principled instructions 7:1-10
- b. See “breach of faith” in 5:15 = sin! (cf. in N.T.)
- c. See “any holy things...” in v.15 = new context!
- d. See required to make “restitution” in v.16
 - i. Restitution in repentance... is baseline...
 - ii. Restitution in repentance now adds 20%...
 - iii. Full restitution & repentance = restoration!
- e. See “shall bear his iniquity” – no one gets away...
- f. See “he has indeed incurred guilt before the LORD”
- g. Ch.6 begins with a comprehensive description:
 - i. See what generates guilt... in need of sacrifice
 - ii. See the sins of commission AND omission!
 - iii. See the sins of actions AND attitudes...
 - iv. See the foundational roles of truth vs lies...

v. NOTE: restitution is to be immediate! (6:5)

Leviticus 6:8 – 7:38 = priestly instructions for each offering

- Burnt Offerings: 6:8-13
- Grain Offerings: 6:14-18
 - Unique time is when priests are anointed
 - At such times, none of sacrifice is eaten
- Ordination Offering 6:19-23
- Sin Offering: 6:24-30
- Guilt Offering: 7:1-10
- Peace Offering: 7:11-18
 - Thanksgiving Offering
 - Vow Offering
 - Freewill Offering
 - Wave Offering
 - NOTE: 7:19- = Peace Offering violations that result in the man being “cutoff from his people”

NOTE: See the variable flexibility within each offering...

- There is room for individual adaptability...
- There are also clear, firm lines of “do & don’t”

NOTE: The Priests have 2 repeated contexts:

- Priests “do” on behalf of the person/people
- Priests “get” a portion of what they “do”

NOTE: Sacrifices BE... best, blessed, unblemished & obedient

NOTE: Laying hands on the sacrifice = symbolic transfer...

NOTE: We are to give our lives as “living sacrifices” (Rom12)

NOTE: We are to BE the “aroma of Christ” (cf. Leviticus!)

NOTE: The Tabernacle (inside & out) was really messy! – JDP

NOTE: The key principle to interpreting & applying the Law:

- Recognize the different types & purposes of laws
- Distinguish the culturally/contextually obsolete:
 - No longer a nationalistic theocracy...
 - No longer a migrating people...
- Determine which are applied in the N.T.
 - Moral vs. Mechanical
 - Principles vs. Particulars
- Discern those laws that our LORD fulfilled!

NOTE: Leviticus 5:1 is revelatory!!!

- Here God is speaking to “if ANYONE sins...”
- See the responsibility of every “witness”
- See the responsibility of the Great Commission!
- See the consequences for cocooning & clamming up!
 - “Sins of omission” are here introduced!
 - Sins of omission & commission are sins! - JDP

NOTE: There is an intensity & seriousness that is inherent to God’s relationship with His people...

The Laws of Acceptable Approach To God (1:1 – 7:38)

A. There are 5 offerings/sacrifices

- a. 3 for when one is IN-Fellowship with God
 - i. Burnt Offering
 - ii. Meal Offering

- iii. Peace Offering
- b. 2 for when one is OUT-of-Fellowship with God
 - i. Sin Offering
 - ii. Trespass Offering
- B. Laws for Administering the 5 offerings/sacrifices
 - a. Burnt Offering
 - b. Meal Offering
 - c. Sin Offering
 - d. Peace Offering
 - e. Summary of Offerings (7:37-38)

The Sacrifices And The Savior

[Leviticus 1-7](#)

Let's review what Israel had been doing prior to the giving of the instructions found in the Book of Leviticus.

About ten weeks after their deliverance from Egypt, the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai ([Ex. 19:1](#)). There God declared His law and gave Moses the instructions for building the tabernacle. Moses erected the tabernacle on the first day of the first month of the *second* year of Israel's liberation ([40:17](#)), so that what you read in [Exodus 16-40](#) covers about nine months (see [Num. 9:1-5](#)).

The Book of Numbers opens with a census being taken on the first day of the *second* month of the second year ([Num. 1:1](#)), which means that what's recorded in Leviticus covers about one month. The tabernacle was ready for use, and now God gave the priests the instructions they needed for offering the various sacrifices.

Six basic offerings could be brought to the tabernacle altar. When worshipers wanted to express *commitment to God*, they brought the burnt offering, and possibly along with it the grain or meal ("meat," KJV) offering and the drink offering (see [Num. 15:1-10](#)). These offerings speak of total dedication to the Lord. The fellowship ("peace," KJV) offering has to do with communion with God, and the sin offering and the guilt ("trespass," KJV) offerings deal with cleansing from God. Each of these offerings met a specific need in the life of the worshiper and also expressed some truth about the person and work of Jesus Christ, God's perfect sacrifice.

The shedding of animal blood couldn't change a person's heart or take away sin ([Heb. 10:1-4](#)). However, God did state that the sins of the worshiper were forgiven ([Lev. 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:10,13,16, 18; 6:7](#)); and He did this on the basis of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross ([Heb. 10:5-14](#)).

Like some people in churches today, Jewish worshipers could merely go through the motions at the altar, without putting their heart into it; but this meant that God had not truly forgiven them ([Pss. 50:8-14; 51:16-17; Isa. 1:10-20; Micah 6:6-8](#)). God doesn't want our sacrifices; He wants obedience from our hearts ([1 Sam. 15:22](#)).

The sacrifices described in [Leviticus 1-7](#) remind us of the basic spiritual needs we have as God's people: commitment to God, communion with God, and cleansing from God.

Commitment to God ([Lev. 1-2; 6:8-23](#))

The burnt offering ([1:1-17; 6:8-13](#)) was the basic sacrifice that expressed devotion and dedication to the Lord. When we surrender ourselves to the Lord, we put "all on the altar" ([1:9](#)) and hold back nothing. **The New Testament parallel is [Romans 12:1-2](#), where God's people are challenged to be living sacrifices, wholly yielded to the Lord.**

The ritual of the offering was spelled out by the Lord and could not be varied. The sacrifice had to be a male animal from the herd ([Lev. 1:3-10](#)) or the flock ([vv. 10-14](#)), or it could be a bird ([vv. 14-17](#)); and the worshiper had to bring the sacrifice to the door of the tabernacle, where a fire was constantly burning on a brazen altar ([6:13](#)). The priest examined the sacrifice to make sure it was without blemish ([22:20-24](#)), for we must give our very best to the Lord (see [Mal. 1:6-14](#)). Jesus Christ was a sacrifice "without blemish and without spot" ([1 Peter 1:19](#)), who gave Himself in total dedication to God ([John 10:17](#); [Rom. 5:19](#); [Heb. 10:10](#)).

Except when birds were sacrificed, the offerer laid a hand on the sacrifice ([Lev. 1:4](#)), an action which symbolized two things: (1) the offerer's identification with the sacrifice and (2) the transfer of something to the sacrifice. In the case of the burnt offering, the offerer was saying, "Just as this animal is wholly given to God on the altar, so I wholly give myself to the Lord." With the sacrifices that involved the shedding of blood, the laying on of hands meant the worshiper was symbolically transferring sin and guilt to the animal who died in the place of the sinner. Even the burnt offering made atonement for the offerer ([v. 4](#)).

The offerer then killed the animal, and the priest caught the blood in a basin and sprinkled the blood on the sides of the altar ([vv. 5, 11](#)). The priest, not the offerer, killed the bird and its blood was drained out on the side of the altar, and its body burned in the fire on the altar ([vv. 15-17](#)). The dead body of the bull, lamb, or goat was dismembered, and the parts washed. Then all of it but the hide was laid in order on the wood and burned in the fire. The hide was given to the priest ([7:8](#)).

The significance of the offering is seen in the repetition of the phrases "before the Lord" and "unto the Lord," which are found seven times in this first chapter of Leviticus ([vv. 2-3, 5, 9, 13-14, 17](#)). The transaction at the altar wasn't between the offerer and his conscience, or the offerer and the nation, or even the offerer and the priest; it was between the

offerer and the Lord. Had the worshiper taken the offering to one of the pagan temples, it might have pleased the heathen priest and his people, but it would not have brought the blessing of the Lord.

The phrase "sweet savour" is used three times in this chapter ([vv. 9, 13, 17](#)) and eight times in chapters 1-3, and it means "a fragrant aroma." Since God is spirit, He doesn't have a body, but physical terms are used in Scripture to depict God's actions and responses. In this case, God is pictured as smelling a fragrant aroma and being pleased with it ([Gen. 8:21](#); [Lev. 26:31](#)). When Jesus died on the cross, His sacrifice was a "sweet-smelling fragrance" to the Lord ([Eph. 5:2](#)); and our offerings to God should follow that example ([Phil. 4:18](#)).

The "law of the burnt offering" is found in [Leviticus 6:9-13](#). God instructed the priests to keep the fire burning on the altar, to remove the ashes from the altar, and then to take them to a clean place outside the camp. It's likely that God originally ignited this fire when the priests were dedicated and began their ministry ([9:24](#)). Because the ashes were holy, they couldn't be disposed of at the camp's refuse heap, but had to be taken to a place that was ceremonially clean. Even the crop of the bird was put with the ashes ([1:16](#)) and not treated like rubbish.

The meal offering ([2:1-16](#); [6:14-23](#); [7:9-10](#)) could be presented at the altar in one of five forms: fine flour, oven-baked cakes, cakes baked in a pan, cakes baked in a frying pan (on a griddle), or crushed roasted heads of new grain. These cakes would resemble our modern baked pie crust or pizza dough. The officiating priest put only a portion of the offering on the altar—the "memorial portion" for the Lord—where it was consumed in the fire; and the rest of the offering went to the priests for their own personal use. Only the males in the family could eat it, and they had to do it in the holy place of the tabernacle ([6:16, 18](#)), and with unleavened bread ([v. 17](#)). The only meal offering that was not eaten was the one presented each morning and evening by the high priest's son, who would succeed him in office ([vv. 19-23](#)). Twice a day, God

reminded His priests that they should maintain purity and integrity as they served Him.

Since grain represents the fruit of our labor, the meal offering was one way for the Jews to dedicate to God that which He had enabled them to produce. The frankincense that was burned with the memorial portion represents prayer ([Ps. 141:2](#); [Rev. 5:8](#)), a reminder of the petition "Give us this day our daily bread" ([Matt. 6:11](#)). But the meal offering was not presented alone; it accompanied one of the sacrifices that involved the shedding of blood. Our hard work can never purchase salvation or earn the blessing of God; for apart from the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin ([Heb. 9:22](#)). But those who have been saved by faith in the shed blood of Christ may dedicate to the Lord what He has enabled them to produce.

This offering represents Jesus Christ as the Bread of Life ([John 6:32ff](#)), the perfect One who nourishes our inner person as we worship Him and ponder His Word. This explains why God laid down such strict conditions for the offerer to meet before the meal offering would be accepted. The offering had to be accompanied with oil ([Lev. 2:1-2, 4, 6, 15](#)), either poured on it or mingled with it, a picture of the Holy Spirit of God, who was given to Christ without measure ([John 3:34](#)). It also had to include salt ([Lev. 2:13](#); [Matt. 5:13](#)), which speaks of our Lord's purity of character. Jesus compared Himself to a grain of wheat ([John 12:23-25](#)), and He was crushed ("fine flour") and put through the furnace of suffering that He might save us from our sins.

Leaven (yeast) and honey were prohibited from being included in the meal offering ([Lev. 2:11](#)). The Jews would associate leaven with evil because of the Passover rules ([Ex. 12:19-20](#); see [Luke 12:1](#); [1 Cor. 5:8](#)), and certainly there was no sin in Jesus Christ. Honey is the sweetest thing nature produces, but our Lord's perfect character was divine and not from this world. The fact that yeast and honey both ferment may also be a factor.

The drink offering ([Num. 15:1-13](#)) is mentioned in [Leviticus 23:13, 18,](#) and [37](#); but its "laws" are not explained there. Like the meal offering, the drink offering was presented after the animal sacrifices had been put on the altar and was a required part of the sacrifice (see [Num. 29:6,11, 18-19](#), and so on). "The fourth part of a hin of wine" ([15:5](#)) would be about a quart of liquid. Neither the offerer nor the priest drank the wine, because all of it was poured out on the altar. Note that the more expensive sacrifices required a larger amount of wine for the drink offering.

The burnt offering, the meal offering, and the drink offering all represent dedication to God and commitment to Him and His work. The pouring out of the wine was a symbol of life being poured out in dedication to God. On the cross, Jesus was "poured out like water" ([Ps. 22:14](#)) and "poured out His life unto death" ([Isa. 53:12](#), NIV). Paul saw himself poured out like a drink offering on behalf of the Philippians, joining in their sacrifice ([Phil. 2:17](#)); and in the Roman prison, he was already "being poured out like a drink offering" ([2 Tim. 4:6](#), NIV) as he anticipated his martyrdom.

Communion with God ([Lev. 3; 7:11-38](#))

There are several distinctive features about the peace offering or fellowship offering that should be noted. For one thing, the offerer could bring a female animal, something not permitted for the other animal sacrifices. If the offering was not in fulfillment of a vow, the sacrifice could have some defects and still be accepted ([Lev. 22:23](#)). After all, it was basically going to be used as food for the priests and the offerer's family; and those defects wouldn't matter.

That leads to our third distinctive feature: the fellowship offering is the only offering that was shared with the worshipers. After the priest had completed the sacrifice, a large portion of the meat went to him; the rest went to the offerer, who could then enjoy a feast with his family and friends. Since the Jews didn't often slaughter their precious animals for meat, a dinner of beef or lamb would be a special occasion. At the

dedication of the temple, Solomon sacrificed 142,000 peace offerings and the people feasted for two weeks ([1 Kings 8:62-66](#)).

In the East, to eat with people is to make them your friends and allies. It means the end of hostilities, as with Jacob and his father-in-law Laban ([Gen. 31:54](#)), or the sealing of friendship, as with Israel and Jethro and his people ([Ex. 18:12](#)). In the church today, the Lord's Supper, or Eucharist, is a simple meal that shows the unity of God's family ([1 Cor. 10:16-18](#); [11:18-34](#)). That's why it's called "the Communion."

The peace offering meal, however, meant more than the enjoyment of good food and fellowship with loved ones. It was also an expression of joyful thanksgiving that the worshiper was at peace with God and in communion with God. He might be giving thanks for some unexpected blessing God sent him ([Lev. 7:11-15](#)); or perhaps he had made a vow to God, and God had answered his prayers; or maybe he was just thankful to God for everything God did for him and wanted to let everybody know ([vv. 16-18](#)). The fellowship offering emphasized the fact that the forgiveness of sins resulted in communion with God and with God's people.

[Leviticus 7:11-38](#) lays down the conditions for the feast, what the people ate, what the priests ate, and what must be done with the leftovers. The blood and the fat were given to God and were never to be used as common food. (There are also good hygienic reasons for this rule.) Anybody who was defiled was forbidden to come to the feast and was "cut off" from their people ([vv. 20-21, 25, 27](#); see [17:4, 9-10, 14](#); [18:29](#); [19:8](#); [20:3, 5-6, 17-18](#); [23:29](#)). In the case of a Sabbath-breaker, being "cut off" meant death ([Ex. 31:12-14](#); [Num. 15:32-36](#)); but we're not sure every violation of the laws of the offerings was a capital crime. In some cases, "cut off from his people" could mean being sent "outside the camp" until the person followed God's instructions for cleansing ([Lev. 15](#)).

On the cross, Jesus Christ purchased reconciliation with God ([2 Cor. 5:16-21](#)) and peace with God ([Col. 1:20](#)) for all who will trust Him; and

we can have fellowship with God and other believers because of His shed blood ([1 John 1:5-2:2](#)). We "feast" on Christ when we feed on His Word and appropriate for ourselves all that He is to us and has done for us. Instead of bringing animals, we offer God "the sacrifice of thanksgiving" ([Ps. 116:17](#)) and "the sacrifice of praise" ([Heb. 13:15](#)), from pure hearts that are grateful for His mercies.

Cleansing from God (Lev. 4-5; 6:1-7, 24-30; 7:1-10)

The sin offering and the guilt (or trespass) offering were very much alike and were even governed by the same law ([7:1-10](#)). Generally speaking, the guilt offering was for individual sins that affected people and property and for which restitution could be made, while the sin offering focused on some violation of the law that was done without deliberate intent. The trespass offering emphasized the *damage* done to others by the offender, while the sin offering emphasized the offender's *guilt* before God. The priest would examine the offender and determine which sacrifice was needed.

The repeated phrase "through ignorance" ([4:2](#), [13](#), [22](#), [27](#); [5:15](#)) means, not that the sinners were ignorant of the law, but that they were ignorant of having violated the law. They had become defiled or disobedient and didn't realize it. However, ignorance doesn't cancel guilt. "Though he wist it not, yet is he guilty" ([v. 17](#); see [vv. 1-5](#) for examples of the sins involved). Once their sin was known, it had to be confessed and dealt with. David used this same word when he prayed, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults" ([Ps. 19:12](#)), that is, "sins I don't know about in my own life."

No sacrifice was provided for people who committed "high-handed" deliberate sins in the full light of the law of God ([Num. 15:30-36](#)). When David took Bathsheba and then had her husband murdered ([2 Sam. 11-12](#)), he sinned deliberately with his eyes wide open. Therefore, he knew that his only hope was the mercy of God ([Ps. 51:1](#), [11](#), [16-17](#)). Being king, he could have brought thousands of sacrifices, but they would not have been "sacrifices of righteousness" ([v. 19](#)).

The sin offering ([4:1-5:13](#); [6:24-30](#)) had to be brought to the Lord no matter who the sinner was; and the higher the sinner's position in the nation, the more expensive the sacrifice. The greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility and the consequences. If the high priest sinned, he had to bring a young bullock ([Lev. 4:1-12](#)). If the whole congregation sinned, they also had to bring a bullock ([vv. 13-22](#)). A ruler brought a male kid of the goats ([vv. 22-26](#)), while one of the "common people" ("a member of the community," NIV) brought a female kid of the goats or a female lamb ([vv. 27-35](#)). A poor person could bring a dove or a pigeon, and a very poor person could bring a non-bloody sacrifice of fine flour ([5:7-13](#)).

Whatever animal was brought, the offender had to identify with the sacrifice by laying hands on it. When the whole nation sinned, it was the elders who did this ([4:15](#)); for as leaders, they were responsible before God to oversee the spiritual life of the people. The animal was slain, and the blood presented to God. In the case of the high priest and the nation, some of the blood was sprinkled before the veil and applied to the horns of the altar of incense in the holy place; and the rest was poured out at the base of the altar. This reminded the nation that the sins of leaders had far greater consequences. The blood of the sacrifices brought by the leaders or the common people was applied to the horns of the brazen altar at the door of the tabernacle.

Note that while the fat of the sacrifice was burned on the altar, the body of the sacrifice was burned in a clean place outside the camp ([vv. 8-12, 21](#)). Why? For one thing, it made a distinction between the sin offering and the burnt offering so that the worshipers wouldn't be confused as they watched. But even more, it reminded the people that the sins of the high priest and the whole congregation would pollute the whole camp; and the sin offering was too holy to remain in an unholy camp. Finally, according to [Hebrews 13:10-13](#), this was a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ who died "outside the city gate... outside the camp" as our sin offering ([vv. 12-13](#), NIV).

The result of this ritual was forgiveness ([Lev. 4:20, 26, 31, 35](#); see [5:10, 13; 6:7](#)). As I mentioned before, even though the sacrifice of animals can't take away sin or change the human heart, the sacrifices pointed to the perfect Sacrifice, Jesus Christ ([Heb. 10:1-15](#)). He is our sin offering ([Isa. 53:4-6, 12; Matt. 26:28; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24](#)).

The trespass offering ([5:14-6:17; 7:1-10](#)) was needed for two kinds of sins: sins against "the holy things of the Lord" ([5:15](#)) and against one's neighbor ([6:1-7](#)). The first category included offenses that involved sacrifices to God, vows, celebration of the special days, and so on, while examples of the second category are given in [verses 2-3](#).

The ritual involved the sinner confessing the sin ([Num. 5:7](#)), restoring the property involved or its equivalent in money, paying a fine equivalent to 20 percent of the value of the damaged property, and sacrificing a ram to the Lord ([Lev. 5:15, 18](#)). The priest valued the ram to make sure of its worth, lest the offender try to atone for his or her sins by giving the Lord something cheap. The restitution and fine were first given to the priest so he would know it was permissible to offer the sacrifice ([6:10](#)). If the offended party wasn't available to receive the property or money, then it could be paid to one of the relatives; if no relative was available, it remained with the priest ([Num. 5:5-10](#)).

The trespass offering illustrates the solemn fact that *it is a very costly thing for people to commit sin and for God to cleanse sin*. Our sins hurt God and hurt others. True repentance will always bring with it a desire for restitution. We will want to make things right with God and with those whom we've sinned against. Forgiveness comes only because of the death of an innocent substitute. The passage in [Isaiah 53:10](#) states clearly that when Jesus died on the cross, God made His Son "a guilt offering" (NIV). The penalty we should have paid, He paid for us!

We haven't been able to probe into the details of these offerings; but what we have studied should make us realize the awfulness of sin, the seriousness of confession and restitution, the graciousness of God in

forgiving those who trust Jesus Christ, and the marvelous love of our Savior in His willingness to die for undeserving people like us.

Jesus provides all that we need. He is our burnt offering, and we must yield ourselves wholly to Him. He is our meal offering, the seed crushed and put through the fire, that we might have the bread of life; and we must feed upon Him. He is our drink offering who poured Himself out in sacrifice and service, and we must pour ourselves out for Him and for others. He is our fellowship offering, making life a joyful feast instead of a painful famine. He is our sin offering and our guilt offering, for He bore our sins on His body ([1 Peter 2:24](#)) and paid the full price for our sins ([1:18-19](#)).

The nation of Israel had to offer six different sacrifices in order to have a right relationship with God, but Jesus Christ "offered one sacrifice for sins forever" ([Heb. 10:12](#)) and took care of our sin problem completely.

Do you believe that Jesus Christ died for all your sins and paid your full debt? Can you say with Mary, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior"? ([Luke 1:46-47](#), NKJV) If not, then trust Him today; if you have trusted Him, share the good news with others.

"Your faith has saved you," Jesus said to a repentant sinner. "Go in peace" ([Luke 7:50](#), NKJV). What wonderful words to hear!

- Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Holy (Leviticus).

INTRODUCTION:

The following is a simple seven-step method that I have found helpful for interpreting and applying the law.

First, affirm inspiration and helpfulness. [Second Timothy 3:16](#) says,

Second, affirm fulfillment in Jesus.

The whole Old Testament is fulfilled in Jesus, even the legal sections like Leviticus. After the resurrection of Jesus, He met a few of His disciples on the road to Emmaus. He told them that His life, death, and resurrection were prophesied in the Old Testament. He said in Luke 24:44,

Everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.

“Everything written about *Me* in the Law of Moses.” The law of Moses, including Leviticus, is somehow about Jesus. Jesus said, “Don’t assume that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill” (Matt 5:17). Jesus said that He came to fulfill the Law. How does Jesus fulfill the Law? We’ll see that as we go through Leviticus...

Third, determine what the law/text meant in its original context.

It’s often been said that a text in the Bible cannot mean what it never meant.

Fourth, note the similarities with today’s context. (in principle(s))

Fifth, identify principles that apply to both ancient and modern contexts.

Walter Kaiser refers to this as “principlization” (*Toward an Exegetical Theology*).

Sixth, consider what the New Testament teaches about each principle.

Does the New Testament teach anything, for example, about the separation of God's people from those who don't know and love God? It does. Did Jesus say anything about that? He did, and He fulfills that part of the Law because He lived separate from the sin of the world, He empowers His followers to be different, and He is the difference between His followers and those who don't know and love God.

- Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary: Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

Seventh, apply the principle to your life.

The principle is that God wants us to be different from those who don't know Him. I apply that principle by rejecting the sinful practices of the world and separating myself from them and to Jesus.

- **Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary:** Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

A Gospel Invitation.

Leviticus 1:1-17

Main Idea: God's holiness requires atonement for sin before we can be in His presence, and He graciously provides the means for atonement.

God delivered His people Israel from slavery in Egypt with miraculous plagues. Once His people were out of Egypt, God parted the Red Sea to deliver them again from Pharaoh's army. Then God met with His people at Mount Sinai. He spoke to Moses

and said that He was making a covenant with His people whom He had delivered from Egypt. He said,

Now if you will listen to Me and carefully keep My covenant, you will be My own possession out of all the peoples, although all the earth is Mine, and you will be My kingdom of priests and My holy nation. (Exod 19:5-6)

God saved His people, He made a covenant with them, He gave them His Ten Commandments, and then He gave additional laws recorded in Exodus that are together called the book of the covenant. The laws God gave to His people were the stipulations of His covenant. When He gave those stipulations to His people, three times they said, “We will do all that the Lord has spoken” (Exod 19:8; 24:3,7). The people promised to be obedient to all the laws God gave them.

I. **God Speaks His Truth to Us.**

The opening words of Leviticus are, “Then the Lord summoned Moses and spoke to him.” One of the hallmarks of the book of Leviticus is the frequent repetition of the clause “the Lord spoke to Moses.” That statement and its variations occur 38 times in Leviticus, and the statement that the Lord “commanded Moses” occurs 18 times. That’s 56 times the book of Leviticus states that God spoke directly to Moses, Aaron, and His people. Is the book of Leviticus important? If we believe that reading the words of God is important, then it’s momentous!

Over and over again, like the beat of a drum, the book of Leviticus says, “God spoke,” “God commanded,” and the book opens and closes with that beat.

When God speaks about worship in His Word, He doesn't address our personal preferences about styles of preaching or styles of music. Since that is not what God says about worship, why do we talk about it so much? Why are our preferences in worship so important to us, when they're not important in God's Word? Who determined the worship forms of Israel? God did. Who was at the center of the worship of Israel? God was. So, when we talk about worship, why do we talk so little about God and so much about what we like? God spoke to Moses about Israel's worship; Moses listened and obeyed. Let us listen to what God says about worship, and let us obey.

II. **God Invites Us to Meet with Him.**

The great truth of the gospel is that in spite of our sin God invites us to meet with Him. While God's people were at the foot of the mountain worshipping an idol, at the top of the mountain God was speaking to Moses giving him the plans for a tabernacle in which God would meet with His people. While they were committing sin, He was planning to meet with them. That's the foundation of the gospel—the good news. God loves and seeks sinful people like us. God began doing that after humanity committed the first sin. When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden, God pursued them and spoke to them ([Gen 3:1-9](#)).

The sacrificial system is God's invitation for people to meet with Him.

God invites us into His presence. One commentator calls the descriptions of the various sacrifices in Leviticus "God's altar calls" (Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers, 25*). God calls us to the altar to

worship Him. Praise God, He invites us into His presence!

III. Our Sin Requires Atonement.

Leviticus 1:4 says the purpose of the burnt offering was “to make atonement.” Atonement is a central theme in Leviticus. The root word translated “atone” or “atonement” occurs 53 times in Leviticus, and only 43 times elsewhere in the whole Old Testament. Thus, Leviticus says more about atonement than any other book in the Old Testament. It is also necessary to understand atonement in order to understand Leviticus. The English word “atonement” is formed by a combination of three words—at-one-ment. “Atonement” refers to reconciliation, two parties coming together, becoming “at one” with each other. The Hebrew word translated “atonement” refers to the beginning of that process. It denotes doing what is necessary for two parties to be reconciled. In the case of our relationship with God, it refers to the taking away of sin. God is perfectly holy, and sin is not allowed in His presence. Therefore, for sinners to be in the presence of God their sin must be removed, and that is the purpose of atonement.

When referring to a person, “atone” has the meaning “make a ransom payment for sin” (Lev 17:11). The life of the sacrificial animal was given in place of the life of the worshiper and was the ransom payment for the death the worshiper’s sin had earned (Rooker, *Leviticus*, 51–52; Wenham, *Leviticus*, 28).

It was a spiritual act; the sacrifice was physical, but its intent was spiritual. If the worshiper did not present the offering by faith, looking to the invisible God to forgive, then the visible act would mean nothing.

The English word used in some older translations to refer to this offering is the “holocaust” offering. The English word “holocaust” is derived from the Greek *holocaustos*, which is used in the Greek translation of this chapter.

(Make below PERSONAL... “hands on” = biblical faith!)

He (the worshiper) placed his hand on the head of the animal as he presented him. That act established a connection between the sacrificial animal and the worshiper—the one who laid a hand on the animal was the one whose sin was being atoned for; he or she would receive the benefit of the sacrifice. Also, laying a hand on the animal may have carried the idea of transference (Ross, *Holiness to the Lord*, 90–91). The sin and guilt of the worshiper was transferred to the animal, so when the animal died he was taking the penalty for the sin that had been transferred to him. The animal took the worshiper’s sin, so he died the worshiper’s death.

Why did the sacrificial system involve death? First, from the beginning of creation God laid down a universal and unalterable truth—sin leads to death. God said that to Adam and Eve before the first sin was committed. He told them, concerning eating the forbidden fruit, “On the day you eat from it, you will certainly die” (Gen 2:17). Sin leads to death—not sometimes, but every time. For the Israelites, their sin could lead to their death, or—if they offered a sacrifice—the animal died in their place. God was providing a graphic, gory demonstration of the fact that sin leads to death. Every time an Israelite worshiper killed a sacrificial animal, watched the priest sprinkle the blood on the altar and cut the animal into pieces, and

watched the body of the animal burn on the altar, God was giving a vivid demonstration of the fact that sin leads to death.

Why did the sacrificial system involve death? First, sin leads to death. Second, God is perfectly holy. He is so holy that no sin is allowed in His presence. We have sinned, so our sin has to be taken away in order for us to be in God's presence to worship Him and fellowship with Him. God's means of taking sin away during the old covenant period was the sacrificial system.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

IV. God Provides the Means of Atonement.

God loves people, so He provided the means of atonement, which was the sacrificial system.

God never said that merely performing a physical act satisfied His wrath and reconciled people to Him. Merely performing a religious ritual has never been acceptable to God. The psalmist wrote to God,

You do not delight in sacrifice and offering. . . . You do not ask for a whole burnt offering. . . . I delight to do Your will, my God; Your instruction lives within me. ([Ps 40:6-8](#))

For worship to be acceptable to God, ritual acts must be accompanied by faith and obedience. What matters to

God is the intent of the heart. It wasn't the smoke of the sacrifice that pleased God; it was the desire of the worshiper to be reconciled to God and his obedience in conforming to God's requirement.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

V. **Jesus Is the Final and Perfect Means of Atonement.**

The sacrificial system described in the book of Leviticus is a foreshadowing of Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross. The sacrifices were physical acts, but they pointed to spiritual realities. They pointed to the holiness of God—sin must be removed in order for people to be in God's presence. They pointed to the mercy of God—He provided the means for sin to be taken away, and He invited people into His presence. They pointed to the desire of the worshipers to be right with God—they were obeying God's requirements for reconciliation. Ultimately the sacrifices also pointed forward to Christ. God had already announced the coming of the Messiah after the first sin in the garden of Eden...

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

In Jesus, God *provided* His sacrifice for sin. As [Hebrews 9:26](#) says about Jesus, "He has appeared one time, at the end of the ages, for the removal of sin by the sacrifice of Himself." [Hebrews 10:10](#) says, "By this will of God, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all." That was God's plan all along. The sacrificial system of the old covenant was God's classroom where He taught the principle of atonement by means of a

sacrifice. As Paul put it in Galatians 3:24, the law is our “tutor to lead us to Christ” (NASB). God used the sacrificial system to teach and to prepare us for the sacrifice of Jesus.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

Jesus takes our sin away because He died as the sacrifice for our sins on the cross. Romans 4:7 says, “How joyful are those whose lawless acts are forgiven and whose sins are covered!” It’s a great joy to know that our sins are forgiven. God invites us to experience that joy.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

Giving to God in Worship.

Leviticus 2:1-16

Main Idea: The God we worship is the Lord of all and the provider of all good things, so we offer our best gifts to Him and live pure lives to express our gratitude and worship.

The first chapter of Leviticus describes the first type of sacrifice—the burnt offering. The second chapter describes the grain offering. The burnt offering and the grain offering were similar and dissimilar. Both the burnt offering and the grain offering had to be of the best quality, both were offered by fire, and both resulted in a pleasing aroma to the Lord, meaning that the Lord was pleased with the offering. But the burnt offering was an animal, and the grain offering consisted of grain—uncooked or cooked. The burnt offering was a blood offering, and the grain offering was not. All of the burnt offering was consumed on the

altar, but only part of the grain offering was burned on the altar, and the rest was eaten by the priests.

What does the description of the grain offering teach us about our relationship with God and our worship of Him?

I. **We Enact Dedication to God.**

The purpose of the grain offering was not atonement, but worship. God provides the produce of the land. God's people worship Him as the One who provides all good things (Jas 1:17).

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

He is the Lord, the King, and in bringing Him their gifts His people were expressing their allegiance to Him. As they brought the sacrifice, they were thanking God for His provision, dedicating their harvest to Him, and symbolizing their dedication to Him. That's what God's people do in worship today. We bring a gift to God as an act of dedication to God—"God, I dedicate myself and my possessions to You." We not only *feel* gratitude; we *show* it. We not only *talk* about our dedication to God; we *demonstrate* it.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

The purpose of the grain offering was not atonement, but worship. In the grain offering God's people enacted their acknowledgement that God had provided for them. As they brought the sacrifice, they

were dedicating their grain to God, symbolizing dedicating their lives to God, and they were thanking Him for His provision.

- A. Dedication to God calls for gratitude.

Our giving to God is an act of gratitude.

- B. Dedication to God calls for giving our best.

If we're dedicated to God, we won't bring something second-rate; we'll bring our best.

When God gave these laws to His people, they were in the wilderness. They weren't growing wheat or barley in the wilderness. They weren't growing anything. They were nomads in the wilderness, not farmers. Therefore, grain to grind into fine flour was rare and valuable, and so was the olive oil poured on the grain offering. Some people have speculated that initially the grain they gave to God as grain offerings had to be the seed grain that they were planning to plant once they arrived in the promised land. Giving that seed grain was an act of faith; they were trusting God that when they gave grain to Him, He would provide for them so they would have enough left to plant a crop in Canaan. When is the last time you gave to God in a way that depleted your reserves so that you had to trust Him to provide? Dedication to God calls for giving our best.

II. We Exclude Corruption from Our Lives.

Verses 4 and 11 state that God allowed no yeast, or leaven, in the grain offering. Why was yeast not allowed? Sometimes the ingredients of sacrifices carried meaning by

association. In the case of yeast, it was associated with corruption. The process of leavening involves fermentation, which is a form of decay and therefore is related to death. In Leviticus the realm of holiness, or cleanness, is the realm of life

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

When we come to worship, we exclude corruption. Scores of statements in the Bible emphasize that God’s people cannot offer acceptable worship to God if the way we’re living is not acceptable to God. Sinful living or thinking is yeast; it’s corruption. The prophet Samuel said to King Saul, “To obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam 15:22). In other words, don’t come to worship and make a show of being right with God only to leave worship and go back to sin. That’s corruption, and to offer right worship we have to clean up corruption.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

III. We Express Communion with God.

All the laws God gave His people from Mount Sinai and from the tabernacle were given in the context of relationship.

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God and His people were in a covenant relationship.

The sacrificial system maintained that relationship. It ensured the continuation of communion between God and His people. The grain offering accomplished that in at least two ways

- A. Right worship affirms our covenant with God.

When God's people added salt to their grain offerings, they remembered that they had a covenant relationship with God. The salt represented that covenant. They also knew that salt is a preservative, and they were symbolizing the continuation of their covenant relationship with God.

B. Right worship affirms our separation from God.

When God's people added salt to their grain offerings, they remembered that they had a covenant relationship with God. The salt represented that covenant. They also knew that salt is a preservative, and they were symbolizing the continuation of their covenant relationship with God.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

IV. **We Exalt Jesus, the Center of Our Worship.**

How do we exalt Jesus as we study the description of the grain offering?

- A. Jesus is our example in showing gratitude.
- B. Jesus is our example in dedication.
- C. Jesus makes possible our dedication.

Atonement for sin is not mentioned in Leviticus 2. That is because atonement had already been achieved in the whole burnt offering described in Leviticus 1. The order is important. Before we can please God with our dedication, our sin must be taken away. We have to already be the kind of people who want to dedicate ourselves to God, and that's what Jesus does in us. He

[makes our dedication possible.](#)

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus

D. Jesus is the first-fruits of our resurrection.

[In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul wrote about the resurrection of Jesus and our resurrection in Jesus. Paul called Jesus “the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep” \(v. 20\). Paul used Levitical language to express the fact that the resurrection of Jesus is the first of a great harvest of souls who will be gathered in heaven for worship.](#)

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

Peace with God.

Leviticus 3:1-17

Main Idea: Our sin separates us from God, but God offers us fellowship with Him, and we experience that fellowship according to His Word and through Jesus.

[Leviticus 3 describes one of the most precious, desired, and sought-after realities in the world, but the majority of the people who seek it do not find it. We cannot access it through believing a human philosophy or standing on a political platform. No amount of money can purchase it, and no human can give it to us. That coveted reality is peace with God. Only God gives it, and only He determines how we access it. So many people fail to access it because they’re unwilling to obtain it His way. The result is that they live without peace with God and without the peace of God.](#)

ILLUSTRATION:

In 1946 Joshua Liebman wrote a book entitled *Peace of Mind*. It was number one on the *New York Times* Best Seller list for 58 weeks, and it was in the top 10 for over three straight years. After *Peace of Mind* was published, Liebman was besieged with phone calls and letters from people wanting peace of mind and asking him how to get it. He tried to help everybody who asked, until he was literally overwhelmed emotionally and physically. He couldn't stand up under the burden, and while his book *Peace of Mind* was still on the best-seller list, Liebman died of a heart attack at age 41 (Allen, *Perfect Peace*, 57). His death illustrates ironically that no human, even if he or she wrote a book titled *Peace of Mind*, is capable of giving peace to other people.

God tells us in His Word not only how He gives us supernatural peace of mind, but also peace with Him. Peace with God is demonstrated in the old covenant fellowship offering described in [Leviticus 3](#). Since the Hebrew word translated “fellowship” is *shalom*, some translations refer to this offering as the peace offering. How do we access and express peace with God?

I. **We See the Need for Reconciliation with God.**

Peace with God begins when we realize we don't have it and we need it. The Bible says that we're not automatically at peace with God. In fact, outside of our faith and His salvation, all humans are at enmity with Him. [Romans 5](#) says before people come to Christ they're “enemies” of God (v. 10). [Colossians 1:21](#) says, “You were alienated and hostile in your minds because of your evil actions.”

5 facts that form the theological foundation for the sacrificial system.

1. God is holy—so holy that no sin is allowed in His presence.
2. God is just; He always punishes sin.
3. The penalty God has ordained for sin is death.
4. People are sinners, so in our sinful state we're not allowed into God's presence, and our sin will lead to death.
5. God is gracious, loving, and faithful to His covenant.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

II. **We Bring Our Lives to God.**

When a worshiper laid his hands on a sacrificial animal, he was identifying with the animal. The animal was no longer just any bull, sheep, or goat. The animal now was identified with the worshiper. Laying hands on the head was a formal ceremony of association, or representation. The animal was now formally associated with the worshiper; he represented the worshiper. The worshiper was a sinner who had earned death for his sin, but the penalty of death was being applied to the animal, because the animal was identified with him by the laying on of hands. When the worshiper saw the animal die, the death represented *his* death for *his* sin.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

God alone gives atonement for sin, so they were bringing their lives to God. [Romans 12:1](#) commands Christians to bring their lives to God: *“By the mercies of God, I urge you*

to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship.”

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

III. **We Submit to the Word of God.**

One question people ask regarding the levitical sacrificial system is, “Why are there so many details?” What does it

matter exactly how they cut up the animal or what parts they burned on the altar? Actually, the details carry important messages. First of all, certain parts of the animal were associated with certain ideas and practices.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

Whether the details expressed a particular theological motif or not, observing them was significant because observance was obedience to God’s spoken word. God expected His people to submit to His word and offer the sacrifices He commanded in the way He commanded. While offering each sacrifice they had to stop and think exactly how and why they were offering it. The detailed instructions were a built-in safeguard against mindless ritual. The specific procedures forced them to slow down, follow God’s instructions, and remember that He was in control of the procedure, not them.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

IV. **We Enjoy Fellowship with God.**

The order of the sacrifices in Leviticus may carry a message about a right relationship with God. Chapter 1 describes

the first sacrifice—the burnt offering to atone for sin. Sin had to be removed before a person could be in the presence of God and be reconciled to Him. The next sacrifice is the grain offering, described in chapter 2. That offering expressed dedication and thanksgiving to God. Then, once sin was atoned for and the worshiper had expressed dedication to God in worship, he or she was ready to enjoy fellowship with God. The order is significant. First comes expiation for sin—the righteous wrath of God is satisfied and He removes our sin from us. Second is dedication—we express thanksgiving and worship to God. Third, we are ready for communion with God.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

Fellowship with God was the central theme of the fellowship offering. As mentioned earlier, the word *shalom* is often translated “peace.” That word referred to being in a state of well-being.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

What a great blessing the fellowship offering was! It celebrated the fact that in the worshiper’s relationship with God things were OK.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

The “food,” or meal, was eaten in the temple area, which symbolized eating in the presence of God, and eating in the presence of God symbolized fellowship with God—a happy, right relationship with God. When we eat with people, we talk with them, laugh with them, and listen to them—it’s an expression of a relationship. A meal is an act of

friendship.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

COMMUNION

**That was the main idea of the fellowship offering—
enacting a reconciled relationship with God and
experiencing fellowship with Him. Christians experience
something similar in the Lord’s Supper. The bread and
the cup represent Christ’s body and blood. When we take
that into our bodies we’re symbolizing fellowship with
Christ through the meal. We call it “Communion”
because we’re experiencing fellowship, communion, with
God. He’s with us, symbolized in the meal. He was also
with His people in the meal of the fellowship offering.**

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus

V. We Express Thanksgiving to God.

[Chapter 7 of Leviticus](#) says that one reason to offer the
fellowship offering was to express thanksgiving.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

VI. We Give Our Best to God.

VII. We Share Our Lives with the People of God.

**Worshippers ate the meal of the fellowship offering with
other people—the priest and other worshippers. They
celebrated the presence of God and His atonement for sin
together. When the people of God follow the Word of God,**

they always get together for worship in God's presence. God tells us to gather to worship Him and celebrate His salvation. Of course that involves attending worship services together, but it involves so much more. Consider all the "one another's" in the New Testament.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

VIII. **We Find Peace with God through the Gospel of Jesus.**

God wants us to be at peace with Him, and we can be at peace with Him after our sins have been taken away. In the old covenant period God did that by means of the sacrificial system in all of its facets. Now God has come to us in Christ Jesus, and He has fulfilled every facet of the sacrificial system in His sacrificial, substitutionary death for our sins on the cross. Now we have peace with God through Christ, who is the perfect sacrifice for sin. As Colossians 1:20 puts it, Christ made "peace through the blood of His cross." Ephesians 2:14 says of Jesus, "He is our peace," and Ephesians 6:15 calls Jesus' gospel "the gospel of peace." Romans 5:1 says it plainly: "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Now that Jesus has offered Himself as our sacrifice on the cross, we need none of the old covenant sacrifices, including the fellowship offering (Heb 9:11-15). We have peace with God through Jesus. We can look for peace from other sources, but they're like applying a Band-Aid to cure cancer. If we look to possessions, power, or passion to bring peace we'll live and die as fools and suffer eternally without God. That's not peace, and it's certainly not peace with God.

Through Jesus we have peace *with* God, and through Jesus we have the peace *of* God. Jesus said, “My peace I give to you” (John 14:27). According to Galatians 5:22, as we live in fellowship with God, His Holy Spirit produces in us the fruit of love, joy, and peace.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

How God Deals with Sin.

Leviticus 4:1-35

Main Idea: All people sin, but through the old covenant sacrificial system and now through Jesus who fulfilled that system, God frees people from past sin and forgives people of present sin.

One question to ask with respect to the offering in Leviticus 4 is what to call it. Many people refer to it as the sin offering because “sin” is the most literal translation of a word that occurs in this chapter 10 times. But later passages in the book of Leviticus state that God commanded His people to offer this sacrifice in situations that had nothing to do with sin, like childbirth, the healing of a skin disease, or contact with a dead body. So the purpose of this offering was to deal with sin but also to remove defilement in a more general sense. So possibly it’s best to refer to this sacrifice as the purification offering.

The fourth chapter of Leviticus describes the procedure for the purification offering for four groups of people—“the anointed priest” (or high priest, [vv. 3-12](#)), “the whole community” ([vv. 13-21](#)), “a leader” of the people ([vv. 22-26](#)), and “any of the common people” ([vv. 27-35](#)).

We live in a culture where the subject of sin is unpopular. In many circles even the word *sin* sounds antiquated and out of place. We're bombarded with exhortations to stop categorizing behavior as wrong or right but to celebrate every form of behavior simply as a neutral personal choice. Even many churches rarely or never use the word "sin." They talk about love and grace, but talking about sin is a downer, it upsets people, and they think it lowers self-esteem. However, to ignore sin is to ignore the Bible.

I. Sin Forms Everywhere.

All the laws, letters, poems, prophecies, and stories of the Bible constitute one big story. That story encompasses all of history from the beginning of creation to the new creation in eternity. The Bible is the meta-narrative, the grand narrative of the history and destiny of humanity. That narrative is a story of sin. Only four chapters in the Bible have no sin in them—the first two chapters of the book of Genesis before the first sin was committed, and the last two chapters of the book of Revelation after sin has been defeated and God's people are in God's presence where sin does not exist. Sin is in the story of humanity.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered
Exposition Commentary – Exalting Jesus in
Leviticus.

A. Sin is universal and powerful.

Sin is powerful. Never think that sin is passive; it's an active force in our lives. We don't sin and then just

return to where we were spiritually. Sin is a set-back; it affects us. It takes us farther than we want to go, and it costs more than we want to pay.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus

B. B Sin is destructive and divisive.

II. God Frees People from Past Sin.

The Old Testament sacrificial system was God’s sin solution for His people—His temporary solution that He used to prepare us for His eternal solution, which is Christ.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

God gave His law to His people at Mount Sinai after He had set them free from slavery in Egypt. When God gave His people the Ten Commandments, He began by saying, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery” (Exod 20:2). First God set His people free; then He gave them His laws for living.

That order is important. God does not give His law to people and say, “Here are some rules and principles I expect you to obey. Do the best you can to follow them, and if you’re good enough you can go to heaven.” No, through His law God shows us how we have sinned, how our sin separates us from Him and from the life He has for us, and how we need Him to forgive us and set us free from sin. Then, once we see our sin and separation from God, we turn to God in faith and ask for His forgiveness and His salvation from sin. He provides salvation from

sin in Jesus, who is God the Son who died as the sacrifice for our sins on the cross. So we put our faith in Him, and just as God set His people free from slavery in Egypt, He sets us free from slavery to sin (Rom 6:23). As Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:4, we are “escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desires.” Just as the Hebrews escaped slavery by God’s power, in Christ we escape sin and corruption. Then, once God has set us free and changed us by His power, He gives us commands in His Word to follow by the power of His Holy Spirit within us.

First comes His redemption, then comes His law. Praise God, He frees people from past sin!

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

III. God Forgives People for Present Sin.

The purification offering in [Leviticus 4](#) was offered specifically for unintentional sin. The word “unintentionally” occurs three times, referring to the purification offerings for the priest, for leaders, and for common people ([vv. 2,22,27](#)). [Verse 13](#) refers to “the whole community of Israel,” and the words “errs, and the matter escapes the notice of the assembly” seems also to indicate unintentional sin. The word “unintentional” refers to a sin of error. It comes from a verb that means to stray (Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Lexicon*, 992–93). An unintentional sin is not premeditated or planned; it’s a sin we just wander into—because of either ignorance or negligence. We unthinkingly stray into trouble, like a sheep ([Isa 53:6](#)).

In [Leviticus 4](#) the same statement occurs 3 times. [Verse 20](#) says, “The priest will make atonement on their behalf, and they will be forgiven.” [Verse 26](#) says, “The priest will make atonement on his behalf for that person’s sin, and he will be forgiven.” [Verse 31](#) says, “The priest will make atonement on his behalf, and he will be forgiven.” That repetition emphasizes the purpose of this sacrifice—to atone for sin and secure forgiveness from God. To atone for sin means to do what is necessary to restore a right relationship with God. The word used to refer to forgiveness is a word that in the whole Old Testament is used only to refer to God’s forgiveness (Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 103).

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

He does forgive! Leviticus 4 carries the message that forgiveness is available to all. God specified that the purification offering was for four groups of people. His forgiveness is available to common people, to leaders, to priests, and to the congregation as a whole. The purification offering was only for unintentional sins, but elsewhere the Old Testament states that God made His forgiveness available for intentional sins (e.g., 2 Sam 12:13; plus, the rituals of the Day of Atonement secured forgiveness for all Israelites, presumably including those who had sinned intentionally; Lev 16:21,30,32,34). In the Old Testament, the only sins not forgiven are the sins of defiant and unrepentant sinners (Num 15:30-31). God makes His forgiveness available to all.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus

Romans 6:23 says, “The wages of sin is death.” Sin always leads to this end. God in His mercy allows for a sacrifice

to die in the place of sinners so they can live. God's decree that sin leads to death is still in effect. My sin and your sin will lead to death. Someone will die for our sin. Either we will die eternally for our sin and remain separated from God, or we can place our faith in Christ, and His sacrificial death on the cross will atone for our sin.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

IV. **Jesus Fulfills the Old Covenant Sacrifices for Sin.**

The Israelites offered sacrifices, and then they offered sacrifices again, and again, and after a while many of God's people merely participated in the sacrificial rituals with no remorse or repentance for their sin. They went through the motions as if the ritual itself was sufficient to atone for sin, like someone attending church with the assumption that their mere presence in the building means that all is well with them spiritually.

God knew about that corruption in advance, and when it happened God sent prophets to preach against it. They preached against the corruption of **legalism**. Many of the Israelites ignored any personal relationship with God; they weren't faithful to the covenant with God, but they continued to observe religious rules. That's legalism—following rules and expecting that to make us right with God.

Following rules can make us look so religious and so righteous, even when wicked thoughts are in our hearts. The principle point of contention between Jesus and the Pharisees was Jesus' priority of the condition of our hearts instead of external compliance to rules and observance of rituals.

We can observe a ritual of repentance and forgiveness, while not repenting or receiving forgiveness.

The righteousness of the Pharisees stopped with external compliance to rules; Jesus requires His followers to have righteous hearts so we don't just appear pure, but are pure.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

A. Repetition led to corruption.

Why didn't God give just one type of sacrifice? Each of the sacrifices teaches us something different about what needs to be repaired in our relationship with God. The whole burnt offering expressed the giving of one's life to God and taught that sin leads to death, the grain offering expressed thanksgiving and dedication to God, the peace offering expressed renewed fellowship with God, and the purification offering dealt with forgiveness for sin. No one sacrifice was sufficient to communicate all of that.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

The sacrifice of Jesus is perfect. The book of Hebrews states that old covenant sacrifices had to be offered repeatedly; Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was offered once for all. Old covenant sacrifices were temporary; Jesus' sacrifice is eternal. Old covenant sacrifices were offered by imperfect priests in a tabernacle made with human hands; Jesus' sacrifice was offered by God the Son Himself in the very presence of God. Old covenant sacrifices applied generally to those who offered the sacrifice; Jesus died for all—Jews and Gentiles.

Hebrews 7:27 says of Jesus, “He doesn’t need to offer sacrifices every day, as high priests do. . . . He did this once for all when He offered Himself.” First Peter 3:18 says, “For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God.” Christ died *for* our sins, *in* our place to bring us to God.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

B. Education led to preparation.

Five Eternal, Counter-Cultural Truths about God, Us, and Our Sin

[Leviticus 5:1-13](#)

Main Idea: When we commit sin, we are guilty before God, but when we confess and seek His forgiveness, He provides atonement for our sin and forgives us.

Leviticus 5:14 begins a section that is devoted to the guilt or restitution offering. Leviticus 5:1-13 is between the purification or sin offering (chapter 4) and the guilt offering (5:14–6:7). So how shall we classify the offering described here? Is it a purification offering with the preceding verses, or is it a guilt offering with the following verses? The words “guilty” or “guilt” appear in verses 2, 3, 4, and 5. However, we will classify it as a sin offering because verses 9, 11, and 12 state, “It is a sin offering.” Also, verses 6 and 7 have the words, “as a sin offering,” verse 8 has “for the sin offering,” and verse 11 has, “as an offering for his sin.” So Leviticus 5:1-13 serves as sort of an appendix to the sin/purification offering, dealing with some special cases.

I. **Transgressing God’s Law Is Sin.**

A. Indifferent silence

- B. Prolonged impurity
 - C. An unfulfilled promise
- II. **Sin Results in Guilt.**

Leviticus 5 describes guilt as a reality, a metaphysical entity attached to someone who commits sin. We commit sin, and we bear guilt. Our culture tends to think of guilt as a psychological pathology. When people feel guilty, that doesn't feel good, so they're prone to go to a therapist to help them feel better. The goal of such therapy is to ameliorate any bad feelings, to help patients feel better about themselves. Many therapists would regard it as poor form to say to a patient, "You feel guilt because you are guilty, and you're guilty because you transgressed God's law and that's sin." Though many people in our culture would regard that approach as wrong, God's Word says that breaking God's law is sin, and when we sin we are guilty. That is a spiritual reality, whether we feel guilty or not. The feeling of guilt is the result of God's gift of conscience that prods us to an awareness of our sin and motivates us to repent of sin and reconcile with God whose holiness we have offended. Perhaps the worst thing we can do is attempt to eliminate the feeling of guilt without addressing the root problem of sin that caused the guilt.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

III. **God Requires Confession of Guilt.**

The sin offering was visual confession, and God said worshipers were to add to the offering their verbal confession. God expected them to declare their sin. When

we realize our guilt, we confess.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

IV. God Provides Atonement for Sin.

The word atonement refers to reconciliation—two parties becoming “at one” with each other. They were estranged from one another, but they’re coming together. Atonement refers to doing what is necessary for two parties to be reconciled. In the case of our relationship with God, it refers to taking away sin. Sin has to be removed for us to be reconciled with God.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

God formalized the removal of sin in the sacrificial system. In order for sin to be removed, God’s righteous wrath must be satisfied.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

In Psalm 51:16-17 David wrote to God, “You do not want a sacrifice, or I would give it; You are not pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. God, You will not despise a broken and humbled heart.” Hebrews 10:4 says, “It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” God’s righteous wrath against sin is not appeased merely by performing a religious ritual—that’s paganism. The one true God sees the heart, and He requires sorrow over sin that leads to confession of sin. That sorrow and confession result in turning from sin and turning to God. That’s what God wants. He wants our hearts to be right with Him.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

***Jesus is God in the flesh, who offered Himself as a sacrifice.
He is both sacrifice and priest.***

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

Do we understand the eternal gravity of what Jesus did “for us”? He allowed Himself to be nailed to a cross on Good Friday. He allowed God the Father to pour out the totality of human iniquity on Him. He became the epicenter of depravity so we could be rescued. On Him was placed *all* of human sin. Abusive fathers beating toddlers to death, pimps seducing teenage runaways into lives of prostitution and drugs—Jesus took that on Himself on the cross; it fell on Him with unspeakable violence. Nazi troops cutting down women and children with machine guns, Canaanites burning their children as sacrifices to Molech, suburbanites killing their babies in the womb because they are too inconvenient or expensive, Persians crucifying thousands to advertise their cruelty, Bible toting deacons praying in church while their wives sit in back hoping the make-up will cover the bruises, Assyrians gloating over the captives they skinned alive, politicians lying for money and power, nice church people gossiping to slander other nice church people, lecherous husbands giving their attention to images on a screen instead of to their wives, suicide bombers murdering innocents in the name of a false god, Crusaders murdering in the name of Jesus, and child molesters making sure their victims don’t testify against them—all of that and more was placed on Jesus on the cross. God the Father dumped the whole pile of human garbage on God the Son on the cross. By that act Jesus won our forgiveness. Forgiveness is also in [Leviticus 5](#).

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

V. **After Confession and Atonement, God Forgives.**

How wonderful to know that we can be forgiven by God!
And His forgiveness is available to everyone. [Chapter 4 of Leviticus](#) says the sin offering was available for every person regardless of social status

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

Thank God that [1 John 1:9](#) says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” The sacrificial system described in Leviticus was God’s invitation to come into His presence and worship Him. We want to accept His invitation through His final and universal sacrifice for sin—Jesus, who is not only the sacrifice but also high priest, the Messiah, and God the Son.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

When We Are Guilty.

Leviticus 5:14–6:7

Main Idea: When we sin, we are guilty of violating our relationship with God, breaking His commands, and hurting other people; but when we realize our sin, repent, and receive God’s atonement, He forgives and restores us.

We underestimate God’s perfect holiness...It is not an exaggeration to say that the way we deal with our guilt before God determines the trajectory of our lives from now into eternity. We can acknowledge our guilt before God and follow His directions to eliminate our guilt; or we can revise our definition of sin, merely attempt to ameliorate our feelings of guilt, and live without the presence of God. A lot of people are settling for merely reducing their feelings of guilt.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

ILLUSTRATION:

It’s common to reduce guilt by revising our definition of sin. A few years ago, a television program was aired in the United Kingdom called “The New Ten Commandments.” The producers had polled 65,000 people in the UK and asked them which of the Ten Commandments are still relevant for living a moral life. Only two of the original Ten Commandments made the top ten—do not kill, and do not steal. The producers then asked people what they believe are the ten most important moral commands for today... Conspicuously absent from that new list of Ten Commandments was any mention of God. In God’s version of the Ten Commandments, the first three commands (the top three!) have to do with relating to God—don’t have any other gods except the one true God, don’t make any idols, and don’t take the name of God lightly.... Thus, people have revised what makes us guilty, excluding God. Ironically, that has not eliminated feelings of guilt.

So, either we exclude God, try to handle our feelings of guilt our own way, and enter eternity without God, or we include God, believe what He says about sin and guilt, follow His directions to eliminate guilt, and enter eternity in His presence not guilty but innocent because of Christ. Those are two entirely different trajectories for living.
- Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

The passage of Scripture considered in this section is about guilt. The English words “guilt” or “guilty” appear five times (5:17,19; 6:4,5,7). The Hebrew word typically translated “guilt,” “guilty,” or “guilt offering” occurs 13 times in these verses (5:15[2x],16,17,18,19[3x]; 6:4,5,6[2x],7).

Many interpreters have called this sacrifice the guilt offering. Some call it the reparation offering because it includes provisions for reparations, or restitution, to be made to those against whom we sin. The Holman Christian Standard Bible translates it as “restitution offering.” The term *guilt* is used in Leviticus to refer to the condition of being guilty of sin *and* to refer to the offering to atone for guilt; when someone bore guilt because of sin, he offered the restitution offering. God knew that His people would transgress His commands and incur guilt, and these are God’s directions to His old covenant people for dealing with it.

God used the sacrifices to teach the world how sinful people are reconciled to Him, and to prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus, who is the final sacrifice for sin through whom all people can be reconciled to God.

- I. **We Are Guilty When We Violate Our Covenant Relationship with God.**

As we read the book of Leviticus we must remember that God did not give these laws to the world in general, or to the Egyptians or Canaanites. He gave these laws to the people with whom He had just made a covenant. God had a covenant relationship with Israel, and His laws were stipulations of that covenant. When they broke one of God's laws, they were sinning against that covenant relationship. Sin was unfaithfulness to their relationship with God.
Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

“breach of faith.” This Hebrew word is not used in the Old Testament to refer to the sin of unbelievers.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

ILLUSTRATION: (marriage covenant)

Israel was the Lord's bride, and when Israel was unfaithful to the Lord, He called it adultery. A marriage covenant calls for absolute faithfulness. A marriage covenant results in a great life, but we have to be faithful to the covenant for that life to be great. No one would marry somebody who said, “I vow to be faithful to you 99 percent of the time.” Nobody wants to sign up for that. In a marriage, 99 percent faithfulness is 100 percent unfaithfulness. God called His people into a covenant relationship with Him. Just as a married person must be faithful to a marriage covenant, God calls us to be faithful in His covenant with us. His covenant is a sacred covenant because it is with God. At Mount Sinai God's people eagerly embraced the covenant with God (Exod 19:7-8; 24:3,7). In Leviticus 5 and 6, and elsewhere, God said that when His people sinned, it was unfaithfulness to Him.

II. We Are Guilty When We Disobey a Command of God.

God has *ultimate* authority over us. When He tells us to do something, we do it because He says so.

III. We Are Guilty When We Lie/Cheat Other People.

IV. God Provides for the Cancellation of Our Guilt.

The verses we are considering in this section address various ways by which we become guilty before God. This passage of Scripture also describes forgiveness of sin. Praise God, He does provide forgiveness!

A. God requires realization of sin.

Leviticus 6:4 mentions realization of sin—***“acknowledged his guilt.”*** Once we sin in ignorance, how do we realize that we have sinned? Sometimes God uses His Word to show us our sin, sometimes a brother or sister in Christ can help us see our sin, or sometimes we see our sin when we prayerfully ask God’s Holy Spirit to show us our sin and He does.... The first step toward receiving God’s forgiveness is our realization that we have sinned.

ILLUSTRATION:

Number of jelly beans vs. best ice cream flavor... in relationship to faith in and following the LORD

God has issued such decrees in His law. According to the New Testament, one purpose of the Old Testament law is to prove we are sinners and point out where we have sinned. **The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 7:7, “I would not have known sin if it were not for the law.** For example, I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, Do not covet.”

In the sixteenth century **Martin Luther compared the law to a hammer and a tyrant.** The law beats us down, oppresses us, and enslaves us.

[I]f you are bruised with this hammer, do not use this bruising perversely, so that you load yourself with more laws, but listen to Christ who says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). When the law oppresses you so that everything seems utterly desperate and thus drives you to Christ for help, then the law is performing its true function. This is the best and most perfect use of the law. . . .

The law’s true function, then, is to show us our sins, to make us guilty, to humble us, to kill us, to bring us down to hell, and finally to take away all help and all comfort; yet this is wholly in order that we may be justified, exalted, brought to life, carried up into heaven, and obtain everything good. Therefore, the law does not just kill, but it kills in order that we may live. (Luther, *Galatians*, 169, 186)

The law shows us our sin, and that humiliates us and confronts us with our need for confession. Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

B. God requires restitution for sin.

To have fellowship with God, thieves had to give back what they had stolen, plus another fifth. Returning what was stolen was important; it demonstrated sorrow for sin and repentance. It ensured that God's people would not offer the restitution offering as a meaningless ritual.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

Second Corinthians 7 describes two kinds of grief over sin—godly grief and worldly grief. Worldly grief over sin is emotion without change. The sinner feels sorry or sad about doing wrong (or about getting caught doing wrong!), but does not change his behavior. That's not repentance. Godly grief is emotion that results in changed behavior. Godly grief includes repentance, which is turning away from sin and living differently (2 Cor 7:9-10). God's requirement in the restitution offering ensured that the worshipers' grief over their sin was godly grief, not worldly grief. They would alter their behavior, not just feel badly. They would change their lives, not just observe a religious ceremony to absolve themselves of guilty feelings.

John the Baptist preached the same message of repentance. Matthew 3:8 says that John the Baptist preached, “Produce fruit consistent with repentance.” Repentance bears fruit, the fruit of changed behavior. Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

If we don't change the way we're living, we haven't repented.

In the restitution offering, people had to “produce fruit consistent with repentance.” God required them to demonstrate that they were serious about turning from their sin, and they demonstrated it by giving back what they took, plus twenty percent. God requires restitution for sin.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

- C. God requires receiving His atonement for sin.

God used the sacrifices to prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus, who is the final sacrifice for sin through whom all people can be reconciled to God. The prophet Isaiah wrote of that coming Messiah, and he used the very word used in Leviticus 5 and 6 to refer to the restitution offering. Isaiah wrote,

The Lord was pleased to crush Him severely. When You make Him a restitution offering, He will see His seed, He will prolong His days, and by His hand, the Lord's pleasure will be accomplished. (Isa 53:10)

When Jesus died on the cross for our sins, He became our restitution offering. God offered the restitution offering for us when He was in Christ on the cross, laying down His life for ours (2 Cor 5:19). To receive salvation and eternal life, we put our faith in Jesus as our sacrifice and our Savior. When we do, in Him we are forgiven. All of our past sin, everything we have done that was against God's commands, everything we should have done but did not do, every wicked thought, every careless word—forgiven. No matter what we have done, we will not suffer eternal death separated from God because Jesus died in our place and we put our faith in Him. Romans 6:23 says, *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

Serving God in God's Way.

Leviticus 6:8–7:38

Main Idea: God gave specific commands regarding how His people were to offer the sacrifices He prescribed, and His people were to obey those commands.

One of the most obvious and important messages of Leviticus is that God's people are to listen to God and live and worship His way, not ours. The passage we consider in this section is a good example of that fact. In the first five chapters of Leviticus, God revealed His pattern that He intended His people to follow in coming into His presence. He told them to offer sacrifices for sin and guilt. In [chapters 6 and 7](#) God repeats that information in greater detail to make sure the priests followed His instructions.

God's people today are also to follow God's instructions for us, and [Leviticus 6 and 7](#) portray principles that are applicable to the church today.

What are those principles?

I. We Depend on God's Presence.

In the opening verses of [Leviticus 6](#) God said three times that the fire on the altar was to *be "kept burning"* ([vv. 9,12,13](#)).

At the beginning of the Israelites' wilderness wandering, [Exodus 13:21](#) says that the Lord went before them as a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night. [Exodus 14:24](#) says the Lord threw the Egyptian army into confusion and appeared to them as a pillar of fire and cloud. [Exodus 19](#) records an awe-inspiring manifestation of God's presence on Mount Sinai. It says, "Mount Sinai was completely enveloped in smoke because the Lord came down on it in fire" ([v. 18](#)). Moses was likely not surprised that the Lord revealed Himself by fire. Moses' first close encounter with the Lord was when He appeared to Moses by means of a fire in a bush that burned but was not consumed ([Exod 3:2](#)).

The New Testament also represents God with fire.

Hebrews 12:29 calls God “a consuming fire.”

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

- A. The perpetual fire reminded the people of their access to God’s presence.

**Jesus said, “*I am with you always, to the end of the age*”
([Matt 28:20](#)).**

Whatever you are going through right now, you have access to God’s presence. The fire is always burning.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

- B. The perpetual fire reminded the people of the availability of atonement.

The fire was always burning, so atonement was always obtainable. God was letting His people know that His atonement and forgiveness of sin were always available.

Hebrews 7:25 says that

Jesus “is always able to save those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them.”

- C. The perpetual fire reminded the people of the activity of God among them.

Chapter 9 of Leviticus records that the priests set the first sacrifices in order, and verse 24 says,

Fire came from the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell facedown on the ground.

The Lord Himself lit the fire on the altar of sacrifice. The fire came from Him, and the people were so in awe of the flames that came from the Lord that they shouted and fell on their faces in reverence.

God was providing the means of forgiveness, so the fire represented both God's supernatural power, mercy and grace.

Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered
Exposition Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

We still need God's power and grace. We need God's grace because we are reconciled to God by grace. [Ephesians 2:8](#) says, "For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift." Who lit the fire of salvation in us? God did it by His grace. He drew us to Him, and He regenerated us. We also need God's power. Once He reconciles us to Himself, we need His power to live as He calls us to live. In [John 15:5](#) Jesus said, "You can do nothing without Me." Thank God, He provides the power we need! Jesus said, "You will receive power when

the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses” (Acts 1:8). God’s power is available through the Holy Spirit. He empowers us to be witnesses. The Holy Spirit is in followers of Jesus (John 16:7-14; Rom 8:9). He produces spiritual fruit in us (Gal 5:22-23) and gives us spiritual gifts to enable us to serve Him (1 Cor 12:4-11).
Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

II. We Provide for Worship Leaders.

A. God commands us to support worship leaders.

That pattern is repeated in the New Testament. In [1 Corinthians 9](#) the apostle Paul referred to this law in Leviticus.

Don't you know that those who perform the temple services eat the food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the offerings of the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should earn their living by the gospel. ([vv. 13-14](#))

Paul wrote something similar in [1 Timothy 5](#). He was writing to Timothy regarding how the church should treat elders, who were spiritual leaders in the early church.

The elders who are good leaders should be considered worthy of an ample honorarium, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says: Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain, and, the worker is worthy of his wages. ([vv. 17-18](#))

Paul was again referring to principles God established in the old covenant. Specifically, he cited [Deuteronomy 25:4](#)

and [24:14-15](#). The principle is that God wants us to provide for those who labor on our behalf.

B. God does not command us to support Him.

III. We Maintain Holiness before God.

Several verses in [chapter 7](#) introduce the idea of being clean before God. [Verse 21](#), for example, says that if someone touches an unclean thing (in other words, touches something the Lord told them not to touch), and then he eats some of the meat from a fellowship offering, he should be punished. He brought uncleanness to worship.

A. We keep away from uncleanness.

Throughout God's Word, God makes it clear that He does not want us to engage in something holy, like worship, when our lives are unholy. He wants us to live holy lives and offer holy worship.

What made an animal clean or unclean? As far as we know, nothing inherent in an animal made it either. It was the command of God that made animals clean or unclean. It was not the thing or the animal that defiled people; it was disobedience to God's command that defiled.

Disobedience to God in the matter of touching an unclean thing was a signal of a deeper problem of the heart, and that problem was rebellion against God and His command.

Paul cited Isaiah's use of this principle when he was writing to the Christians in Corinth to be different from people who do not know Christ. He wrote, "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord; do not touch any unclean thing" (2 Cor 6:17). God calls His people to stay away from uncleanness and obey Him.
Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition
Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

- B. We show reverence for God's means of atonement.

CLOSING Summary:

All of the sacrifices prepared people for the coming of Jesus—God the Son and humanity's Savior. The whole burnt offering was consumed completely on the altar; all of it was burned, nothing remained. Jesus also gave all of Himself as a sacrifice, and [Philippians 2](#) says that "He emptied Himself . . . even to death on a cross" ([vv. 2:7-8](#)).

The grain offering signified thanksgiving and dedication to God. Jesus expressed thanksgiving to God the Father ([Luke 10:21](#); [John 11:41](#)), and He was completely dedicated to God. He said, "I have come down from heaven, not to do My will, but the will of Him who sent Me" ([John 6:38](#)). The fellowship offering expressed peace with God. Jesus had and has perfect fellowship with God the Father. In [John 10:30](#) He said, "The Father and I are one." Jesus also *made* peace with

God possible for us; [Colossians 1:20](#) says He made “peace through the blood of His cross.”

The sin offering was to make atonement for sin. God judges sin, and His penalty for sin is death. The sin offering satisfied the wrath of God against sin. Jesus was our sin offering when He died on the cross for our sins. The New Testament word for satisfying God’s wrath against sin is “propitiation,” and [1 John 4:10](#) says, “Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” The restitution offering was for the guilt of sin and involved making restitution for wrongs done, paying back debts owed because of sin. The death of Jesus on the cross also fulfilled the restitution offering. [Colossians 2:13-14](#) says God

forgave us all our trespasses. He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross.

Jesus paid our sin debt on the cross.

Jesus wasn’t just the next step in God’s plan. He was always God’s plan, and He is the final, once-for-all sacrifice for sin.

- Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

Chapter 1

The Offerings ([1:1,2](#))

The offering of sacrifices was an ordinance of true religion, from the fall of man unto the coming of Christ. But till the Israelites were in the wilderness, no very particular regulations seem to have been appointed. The general design of these laws is plain. The sacrifices typified Christ; they also shadowed out the believer's duty, character, privilege, and communion with God. There is scarcely any thing spoken of the Lord Jesus in Scripture which has not also a reference to his people. This book begins with the laws concerning sacrifices; the most ancient were the burnt-offerings, about which God here gives Moses directions. It is taken for granted that the people would be willing to bring offerings to the Lord. The very light of nature directs man, some way or other, to do honour to his Maker, as his Lord. Immediately after the fall, sacrifices were ordained.

From the Herds ([1:3-9](#))

In the due performance of the Levitical ordinances, the mysteries of the spiritual world are represented by corresponding natural objects; and future events are exhibited in these rites. Without this, the whole will seem unmeaning ceremonies. There is in these things a type of the sufferings of the Son of God, who was to be a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world? The burning body of an animal was but a faint representation of that everlasting misery, which we all have deserved; and which our blessed Lord bore in his body and in his soul, when he died under the load of our iniquities. Observe, 1. The beast to be offered must be without blemish. This signified the strength and purity that were in Christ, and the holy life that should be in his people. 2. The owner must offer it of his own free will. What is done in religion, so as to please God, must be done by love. Christ willingly offered himself for us. 3. It must be offered at the door of the tabernacle, where the brazen altar of burnt-offerings stood, which sanctified the gift: he must offer it at the door, as one unworthy to enter, and acknowledging that a sinner can have no communion with God, but by sacrifice. 4. The offerer must put his hand upon the head of his offering, signifying thereby, his desire and hope that it might be accepted from him, to make atonement for

him. 5. The sacrifice was to be killed before the Lord, in an orderly manner, and to honour God. It signified also, that in Christians the flesh must be crucified with its corrupt affections and lust. 6. The priests were to sprinkle the blood upon the altar; for the blood being the life, that was it which made atonement. This signified the pacifying and purifying of our consciences, by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ upon them by faith. 7. The beast was to be divided into several pieces, and then to be burned upon the altar. The burning of the sacrifice signified the sharp sufferings of Christ, and the devout affections with which, as a holy fire, Christians must offer up themselves, their whole spirit, soul, and body, unto God. 8. This is said to be an offering of a sweet savour. As an act of obedience to a Divine command, and a type of Christ, this was well-pleasing to God; and the spiritual sacrifices of Christians are acceptable to God, through Christ, [1Pe 2:5](#).

From the Flocks, and of Fowls ([1:10-17](#))

Those who could not offer a bullock, were to bring a sheep or a goat; and those who were not able to do that, were accepted of God, if they brought a turtle-dove, or a pigeon. Those creatures were chosen for sacrifice which were mild, and gentle, and harmless; to show the innocence and meekness that were in Christ, and that should be in Christians. The offering of the poor was as typical of Christ's atonement as the more costly sacrifices, and expressed as fully repentance, faith, and devotedness to God. We have no excuse, if we refuse the pleasant and reasonable service now required. But we can no more offer the sacrifice of a broken heart, or of praise and thanksgiving, than an Israelite could offer a bullock or a goat, except as God hath first given to us. The more we do in the Lord's service, the greater are our obligations to him, for the will, for the ability, and opportunity. In many things God leaves us to fix what shall be spent in his service, whether of our time or our substance; yet where God's providence has put much into a man's power, scanty offerings will not be accepted, for they are not proper expressions of a willing mind. Let us be devoted in body and soul to his

service, whatever he may call us to give, venture, do, or suffer for his sake.

Chapter 2

The Meat-Offering of Flour ([2:1-11](#))

Meat-offerings may typify Christ, as presented to God for us, and as being the Bread of life to our souls; but they rather seem to denote our obligation to God for the blessings of providence, and those good works which are acceptable to God. The term "meat" was, and still is, properly given to any kind of provision, and the greater part of this offering was to be eaten for food, not burned. These meat-offerings are mentioned after the burnt-offerings: without an interest in the sacrifice of Christ, and devotedness of heart to God, such services cannot be accepted. Leaven is the emblem of pride, malice, and hypocrisy, and honey of sensual pleasure. The former are directly opposed to the graces of humility, love, and sincerity, which God approves; the latter takes men from the exercises of devotion, and the practice of good works. Christ, in his character and sacrifice, was wholly free from the things denoted by leaven; and his suffering life and agonizing death were the very opposites to worldly pleasure. His people are called to follow, and to be like him.

The Offering of First-Fruits ([2:12-16](#))

Salt is required in all the offerings. God hereby intimates to them that their sacrifices, in themselves, were unsavoury. All religious services must be seasoned with grace. Christianity is the salt of the earth. Directions are given about offering their first-fruits at harvest. If a man, with a thankful sense of God's goodness in giving him a plentiful crop, was disposed to present an offering to God, let him bring the first ripe and full ears. Whatever was brought to God must be the best in its kind, though it were but green ears of corn. Oil and frankincense must be put upon it. Wisdom and humility soften and sweeten the spirits and services

of young people, and their green ears of corn shall be acceptable. God takes delight in the first ripe fruits of the Spirit, and the expressions of early piety and devotion. Holy love to God is the fire by which all our offerings must be made. The frankincense denotes the mediation and intercession of Christ, by which our services are accepted. Blessed be God that we have the substance, of which these observances were but shadows. There is that excellency in Christ, and in his work as Mediator, which no types and shadows can fully represent. And our dependence thereon must be so entire, that we must never lose sight of it in any thing we do, if we would be accepted of God.

Chapter 3

The Peace-Offering of the Herd ([3:1-5](#))

The peace-offerings had regard to God as the giver of all good things. These were divided between the altar, the priest, and the owner. They were called peace-offering, because in them God and his people did, as it were, feast together, in token of friendship. The peace-offerings were offered by way of supplication. If a man were in pursuit of any mercy, he would add a peace-offering to his prayer for it. Christ is our Peace, our Peace-offering; for through him alone it is that we can obtain an answer of peace to our prayers. Or, the peace-offering was offered by way of thanksgiving for some mercy received. We must offer to God the sacrifice of praise continually, by Christ our Peace; and then this shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock.

The Peace-Offering of the Flock ([3:6-17](#))

Here is a law that they should eat neither fat nor blood. As for the fat, it means the fat of the inwards, the suet. The blood was forbidden for the same reason; because it was God's part of every sacrifice. God would not permit the blood that made atonement to be used as a common thing, [Heb 10:29](#); nor will he allow us, though we have the comfort of the atonement made, to claim for ourselves any share in the honour of

making it. This taught the Jews to observe distinction between common and sacred things; it kept them separate from idolaters. It would impress them more deeply with the belief of some important mystery in the shedding of the blood and the burning the fat of their solemn sacrifices. Christ, as the Prince of peace, "made peace with the blood of his cross." Through him the believer is reconciled to God; and having the peace of God in his heart, he is disposed to follow peace with all men. May the Lord multiply grace, mercy, and peace, to all who desire to bear the Christian character.

Chapter 4

The Sin-Offering of Ignorance for the Priest ([4:1-12](#))

Burnt-offerings, meat-offerings, and peace-offerings, had been offered before the giving of the law upon mount Sinai; and in these the patriarchs had respect to sin, to make atonement for it. But the Jews were now put into a way of making atonement for sin, more particularly by sacrifice, as a shadow of good things to come; yet the substance is Christ, and that one offering of himself, by which he put away sin. The sins for which the sin-offerings were appointed are supposed to be open acts. They are supposed to be sins of commission, things which ought not to have been done. Omissions are sins, and must come into judgment: yet what had been omitted at one time, might be done at another; but a sin committed was past recall. They are supposed to be sins committed through ignorance. The law begins with the case of the anointed priest. It is evident that God never had any infallible priest in his church upon earth, when even the high priest was liable to fall into sins of ignorance. All pretensions to act without error are sure marks of Antichrist. The beast was to be carried without the camp, and there burned to ashes. This was a sign of the duty of repentance, which is the putting away sin as a detestable thing, which our soul hates. The sin-offering is called sin. What they did to that, we must do to our sins; the

body of sin must be destroyed, [Rom 6:6](#). The apostle applies the carrying this sacrifice without the camp to Christ, [Heb 13:11-13](#).

For the Whole Congregation ([4:13-21](#))

If the leaders of the people, through mistake, caused them to err, an offering must be brought, that wrath might not come upon the whole congregation. When sacrifices were offered, the persons, on whose behalf they were devoted, were to lay their hands on the heads of the victims, and to confess their sins. The elders were to do so, when the sacrifices were offered for the whole congregation. The load of sin was supposed then to be borne by the guiltless animal. When the offering is completed, it is said, atonement is made, and the sin shall be forgiven. The saving of churches and kingdoms from ruin, is owing to the satisfaction and mediation of Christ.

For a Ruler ([4:22-26](#))

Those who have power to call others to account, are themselves accountable to the Ruler of rulers. The sin of the ruler, committed through ignorance, must come to his knowledge, either by the check of his own conscience, or by the reproof of his friends; both which even the best and greatest, not only should submit to, but be thankful for. That which I see not, teach thou me, and, Show me wherein I have erred, are prayers we should put up to God every day; that if, through ignorance, we fall into sin, we may not through ignorance abide in it.

For Any of the People ([4:27-35](#))

Here is the law of the sin-offering for a common person. To be able to plead, when charged with sin, that we did it ignorantly, and through the surprise of temptation, will not bring us off, if we have no interest in that great plea, Christ hath died. The sins of ignorance committed by a common person, needed a sacrifice; the greatest are not above, the meanest are not below Divine justice. None, if offenders, were overlooked. Here rich and poor meet together; they are alike sinners, and

welcome to Christ. From all these laws concerning the sin-offerings, we may learn to hate sin, and to watch against it; and to value Christ, the great and true Sin-offering, whose blood cleanses from all sin, which it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away. For us to err, with the Bible in our hands, is the effect of pride, sloth, and carelessness. We need to use frequent self-examination, with serious study of the Scriptures, and earnest prayer for the convincing influences of God the Holy Spirit; that we may detect our sins of ignorance, repent, and obtain forgiveness through the blood of Christ.

Chapter 5

Concerning Various Trespasses ([5:1-13](#))

The offences here noticed are, 1. A man's concealing the truth, when he was sworn as a witness to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. If, in such a case, for fear of offending one that has been his friend, or may be his enemy, a man refuses to give evidence, or gives it but in part, he shall bear his iniquity. And that is a heavy burden, which, if some course be not taken to get it removed, will sink a man to hell. Let all that are called at any time to be witnesses, think of this law, and be free and open in their evidence, and take heed of prevaricating. An oath of the Lord is a sacred thing, not to be trifled with. 2. A man's touching any thing that was ceremonially unclean. Though his touching the unclean thing only made him ceremonially defiled, yet neglecting to wash himself according to the law, was either carelessness or contempt, and contracted moral guilt. As soon as God, by his Spirit, convinces our consciences of any sin or duty, we must follow the conviction, as not ashamed to own our former mistake. 3. Rash swearing, that a man will do or not do such a thing. As if the performance of his oath afterward prove unlawful, or what cannot be done. Wisdom and watchfulness beforehand would prevent these difficulties. In these cases the offender must confess his sin, and bring his offering; but the offering was not accepted, unless accompanied with confession and humble prayer for

pardon. The confession must be particular; that he hath sinned in that thing. Deceit lies in generals; many will own they have sinned, for that all must own; but their sins in any one particular they are unwilling to allow. The way to be assured of pardon, and armed against sin for the future, is to confess the exact truth. If any were very poor, they might bring some flour, and that should be accepted. Thus the expense of the sin-offering was brought lower than any other, to teach that no man's poverty shall ever bar the way of his pardon. If the sinner brought two doves, one was to be offered for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering. We must first see that our peace be made with God, and then we may expect that our services for his glory will be accepted by him. To show the loathsomeness of sin, the flour, when offered, must not be made grateful to the taste by oil, or to the smell by frankincense. God, by these sacrifices, spoke comfort to those who had offended, that they might not despair, nor pine away in their sins. Likewise caution not to offend any more, remembering how expensive and troublesome it was to make atonement.

Concerning Trespasses Against the Lord ([5:14-19](#))

Here are offerings to atone for trespasses against a neighbour. If a man put to his own use unwittingly, any thing dedicated to God, he was to bring this sacrifice. We are to be jealous over ourselves, to ask pardon for the sin, and make satisfaction for the wrong, which we do but suspect ourselves guilty of. The law of God is so very broad, the occasions of sin in this world are so numerous, and we are so prone to evil, that we need to fear always, and to pray always, that we may be kept from sin. Also we should look before us at every step. The true Christian daily pleads guilty before God, and seeks forgiveness through the blood of Christ. And the gospel salvation is so free, that the poorest is not shut out; and so full, that the most burdened conscience may find relief from it. Yet the evil of sin is so displayed as to cause every pardoned sinner to abhor and dread it.

Chapter 6

Concerning Trespasses Against Our Neighbour ([6:1-7](#))

Though all the instances relate to our neighbour, yet it is called a trespass against the Lord. Though the person injured be mean, and even despicable, yet the injury reflects upon that God who has made the command of loving our neighbour next to that of loving himself. Human laws make a difference as to punishments; but all methods of doing wrong to others, are alike violations of the Divine law, even keeping what is found, when the owner can be discovered. Frauds are generally accompanied with lies, often with false oaths. If the offender would escape the vengeance of God, he must make ample restitution, according to his power, and seek forgiveness by faith in that one Offering which taketh away the sin of the world. The trespasses here mentioned, still are trespasses against the law of Christ, which insists as much upon justice and truth, as the law of nature, or the law of Moses.

Concerning the Burnt-Offering ([6:8-13](#))

The daily sacrifice of a lamb is chiefly referred to. The priest must take care of the fire upon the altar. The first fire upon the altar came from heaven, Lev 6:9:24; by keeping that up continually, all their sacrifices might be said to be consumed with the fire from heaven, in token of God's acceptance. Thus should the fire of our holy affections, the exercise of our faith and love, of prayer and praise, be without ceasing.

Concerning the Meat-Offering ([6:14-23](#))

The law of the burnt-offerings put upon the priests a great deal of care and work; the flesh was wholly burnt, and the priests had nothing but the skin. But most of the meat-offering was their own. It is God's will that his ministers should be provided with what is needful.

Concerning the Sin-Offering ([6:24-30](#))

The blood of the sin-offering was to be washed out of the clothes on which it should happen to be sprinkled, which signified the regard we ought to have to the blood of Christ, not counting it a common thing. The vessel in which the flesh of the sin-offering was boiled must be broken, if it were an earthen one; but if a brazen one, well washed. This showed that the defilement was not wholly taken away by the offering; but the blood of Christ thoroughly cleanses from all sin. All these rules set forth the polluting nature of sin, and the removal of guilt from the sinner to the sacrifice. Behold and wonder at Christ's love, in that he was content to be made a sin-offering for us, and so to procure our pardon for continual sins and failings. He that knew no sin was made sin (that is, a sin-offering) for us, [2Co 5:21](#). Hence we have pardon, and not only pardon, but power also, against sin, [Rom 8:3](#).

Chapter 7

Concerning the Trespass-Offering ([7:1-10](#))

In the sin-offering and the trespass-offering, the sacrifice was divided between the altar and the priest; the offerer had no share, as he had in the peace-offerings. The former expressed repentance and sorrow for sin, therefore it was more proper to fast than feast; the peace-offerings denoted communion with a reconciled God in Christ, the joy and gratitude of a pardoned sinner, and the privileges of a true believer.

Concerning the Peace-Offering ([7:11-27](#))

As to the peace-offerings, in the expression of their sense of mercy, God left them more at liberty, than in the expression of their sense of sin; that their sacrifices, being free-will offerings, might be the more acceptable, while, by obliging them to bring the sacrifices of atonement, God shows the necessity of the great Propitiation. The main reason why blood was forbidden of old, was because the Lord had appointed blood for an atonement. This use, being figurative, had its end in Christ, who by his

death and blood-shedding caused the sacrifices to cease. Therefore this law is not now in force on believers.

The Wave and Heave Offerings ([7:28-34](#))

The priest who offered, was to have the breast and the right shoulder. When the sacrifice was killed, the offerer himself must present God's part of it; that he might signify his cheerfully giving it up to God. He was with his own hands to lift it up, in token of his regard to God as the God of heaven; and then to wave it to and fro, in token of his regard to God as the Lord of the whole earth. Be persuaded and encouraged to feed and feast upon Christ, our Peace-offering. This blessed Peace-offering is not for the priests only, for saints of the highest rank and greatest eminence, but for the common people also. Take heed of delay. Many think to repent and return to God when they are dying and dropping into hell; but they should eat the peace-offering, and eat it now. Stay not till the day of the Lord's patience be run out, for eating the third day will not be accepted, nor will catching at Christ when thou art gone to hell!

The Conclusion of These Institutions ([7:35-38](#))

Solemn acts of religious worship are not things which we may do or not do at our pleasure; it is at our peril if we omit them. An observance of the laws of Christ cannot be less necessary than of the laws of Moses.

- Matthew Henry Concise Bible Commentary.

[LINKING Leviticus & Discipleship:](#)

TIM KELLER'S WISDOM ON DISCIPLE MAKING

February 6, 2018



Tim Keller is one of the most respected Christian leaders of our time. He is an author, scholar, and recently retired pastor of the influential Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. When the New York Times wants to hear a voice from a thoughtful Evangelical leader, he is their go-to man.

So, when Tim Keller speaks on making disciples of secular people, everyone in our discipleship-first tribe should be quick to listen.

Tim made two presentations at the Downline Summit this past weekend, and then I was able to speak to him privately afterward. Downline is one of our disciple making partners ([click here for more information](#)).

Here is a summary of three key things that Tim said about reaching and discipling secular people.

1. Put a Priority on Personal Relationships

Keller says that secular people are less and less inclined to check out our church gatherings, regardless of how well we lead them. But they are open to conversations in the midst of genuine personal relationships. The biggest barrier, he says, is that most

Christians are afraid to engage in these conversations because they do not know how to talk about the difficult topics. So church leaders must focus on training everyday Christians how to think about and respond to the key questions of our time.

2. Remember the Echoes of God

Drawing upon the work of N.T. Wright and C.S. Lewis, Keller reminded everyone of the common ground that we all share – religious and secular people alike. He described this common ground as “echoes of God” that even atheists will acknowledge.

- The Passion for Justice Echo – we all care about it, yet for truly secular people there is no ultimate foundation of justice.
- The Longing for Joy Echo – it was C.S. Lewis who most eloquently pointed out that our cravings for ultimate and lasting joy in this world points to another world.
- The Echo to be known and loved – we all crave relationships where we are known and loved. This echo points directly to core Christian teachings.
- The Emptiness Echo – even though many dismiss it, we all have a fear of death and loss of meaning in our lives. The gospel uniquely addresses these questions.

3. We Must Train Everyday Christians in Counter Cultural Beliefs

The individual quest for autonomous expression and fulfillment is the driving value of our Western culture. Keller draws on the work of philosopher Charles Taylor (Sources of the Self) to point out that this is a pagan impulse that denies the created order. We were made to know God first and foremost and find our meaning in reference to him.

Individuals were not made to be the center – and this focus on self as the foundation of meaning is now the air we breathe. Life is ultimately not about what we want or think or feel (as long as it does not hurt others). God is the center.

Keller says that this secular view is coming at us 24-7 and we must counter disciple people on how we think differently. Yet, most church leaders do not realize the hollowing out that is happening under the surface in the minds of everyday Christians. It is a hollowing out that is undermining and destroying the faith in ways we cannot yet see happening.

Pointing to how Jesus disciplined people in the sermon on the mount (Matthew 5), Keller says church leaders must teach Christians how to think critically about the daily messages they hear. We should develop a regular formula like the following:

- “You have heard it said, (worldly viewpoint), but Jesus tells us (biblical viewpoint).”
- You have heard it said, focus on what you want, but Jesus tells us we are to focus on God and others.
- You have heard it said, that life is about getting what you want for yourself, but Jesus said that it is about knowing and following what God wants for you.
- You have heard it said, that we can pursue any sex we want as long as we do not hurt others, but Jesus tells us that God made us and gave us important boundaries for our sexual relationships.

We must contrast and teach what our cultural leaders say with what Jesus says. This will have a big impact on how we teach and preach as leaders in our churches.

Keller has a lot to say to us that day. Privately he told me that he believes that Robert Coleman’s seminal work on Jesus’ master plan for making disciples is essentially correct...

Keller is in favor of large gatherings for preaching, but he does believe that more and more churches and ministries must adopt Jesus' focus on personal relationships for disciple making – in contrast to large gatherings – if we want to reach secular people.

Living on Mission

By [Craig Etheredge](#) | [February 3, 2018](#) | [No Comments](#) | [blog](#)
February 2018 Blog Theme: Living on Mission

You were made to make an eternal impact.

God didn't save you to simply live a life that was safe, predictable and cautious. He saved you to leave a legacy of faith — passed down from one person to another — that will change generations long after you are gone. I can say from personal experience that there is no greater excitement or thrill than seeing a person come to faith in Christ and begin to walk with Him in a new way. That calling is what Jesus invites every one of us into — the calling to leave a legacy.

It was a crisp morning as the sun climbed up over the mountains surrounding Lake Gennesaret in northern Israel. The fishermen had been working all night, catching schools of fish in their nets as they rose from the depths to feed on the water's surface. These men were used to working all night with only the moon as their light, but now the dawn had come and the fishing was done. They were cleaning and repairing their equipment, mending nets, untangling cables, and replenishing supplies when suddenly Jesus came walking down the shoreline.

By this point in time, these fishermen knew Him pretty well. They had been following Jesus off and on for over a year. They loved listening to Him preach, and they were amazed at the miracles He performed. One time, while they were with Jesus at a wedding celebration in Cana — just a few miles away from the place they were working — Jesus turned water into wine. The crowds gasped in amazement, and it was then that these men realized that Jesus was no ordinary rabbi. He was someone wholly and completely different than anyone they had ever seen.

On another occasion, they were with Jesus when He went to Jerusalem to the temple for Passover. In a flash of rage, He flipped over the tables where the temple money changers were converting the cash of worshipers into temple currency, another way to squeeze money out of them. Jesus cried out, "My Father's house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves!"

Jesus had authority. He had passion. More than anything, it was clear that He was on a mission, and no one was going to deter Him from that mission. They had seen Jesus go toe to toe with some of Israel's most powerful religious leaders, and they had watched Him reach out to the outcast and marginalized with compassion and love. People were all the same to Jesus; they all needed to be reconciled to His Father.

“But on this one morning, Jesus walked up to these men and called out, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,’” (Matthew 4.19 ESV). In effect, He was saying, “Hey guys, if you think catching fish is great, just wait until you experience what it’s like to catch people!”

That day Jesus was inviting these men to a higher mission. He was calling them out. He was challenging them to stop giving their lives to the mundane things in life and instead, live with a greater vision in mind, a greater sense of purpose. That day, He was calling them to go beyond just trying to grind out a living and start truly living the life God had intended them to live all along — a life on mission with Him.

I’m not sure where you are right now in life. Maybe you are just starting out with big dreams of success and fortune, and everyone knowing your name when you are done. Maybe you are just slugging it out day after day, doing your best to keep your head above the water of demands and expectations that keep rising by the minute. Maybe you have accomplished great things, and now you are left wondering if this is all life has to offer. I don’t know where you are in life ... but I do know where Jesus is calling you.

Jesus is calling you to live on mission with Him.

The call Jesus extended to the men on the lake that day is the same call He extends to you right now. It’s a call to leave behind your preoccupation with lesser, temporal things and pursue eternal things. It’s a call to put aside a shortsighted vision for your life and lift your eyes to His greater vision. In a very real way, Jesus is calling you to an adventure of living with Him day by day, and being used by Him to leave behind a legacy of faith that will keep growing and transforming people’s lives long after you are gone.

Sound good? Here’s the catch — It will cost you everything!

The men who heard Jesus’ words that morning left everything — their boats, their nets, even their fathers. They left behind what was familiar to them in order to follow Jesus, and they had no idea where it would all lead. In the same way, Jesus’ call is a call to leave behind your vision of success and adopt Jesus’ vision of success, which is living with His mission as your passion.

Think about it. One hundred years from now, no one will care how high you climbed in your company, where you lived or what kind of car you drove. The only thing that will matter is what you did with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the lives you touched. If you give your best to things that don’t really matter in the grand scheme of eternity, then you will have wasted the one and only life you’ve been given, and squandered your opportunity to be used by God in a significant and powerful way.

If you surrender your life to Jesus and make His mission in life your mission in life, He will do more through you than you ever dreamed possible. Those simple fishermen made their decision that day and they became world changers. What choice will you make?

Written by Craig Etheredge