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Leviticus 1

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Leviticus. 1

THE FOCUS IS BURNT OFFERINGS

Topics.

- The tent of meeting and laws for the burnt offering of a bull.
- Laws for the burnt offering of a male sheep or goat.
- Laws for the burnt offering of turtledoves and pigeons.
- General laws for burnt offerings and lessons to learn.
- Three types of animals to be sacrificed in burnt offerings.
- Personal involvement and identification with the sacrificed animal.
- Purpose of burnt sin offerings and the ancient Israelites.
- The application of burnt offerings for New Testament believers today.
- Acceptance with God, atonement, identification and sacrifice.
- Male and female animals, Old Testament worship and sacrifices.

INTRODUCTION: the book of Leviticus is about ceremonial rules and civil laws that God gave to Moses after He had given him the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.

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- These are the statutes and rules and laws that the LORD made between him and the people of Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai. (Lev. 26:46).

Either on Mount Sinai or when he met with him in the Tabernacle (also called the tent of meeting) when they were in the wilderness near the Mountain. Moses was to give these ceremonial laws to the Levitical priesthood, they embrace rules concerning sacrifices, offerings and worship; the ordination of Aaron and his sons and their ceremonial cleanness; the Day of Atonement; feasts and holy days and the Year of Jubilee. The civil and social laws and laws of justice he was to give to the government of Israel to implement within their society. The ceremonial and civil laws were not given to the secular world but are laws God gave to the nation of Israel. The central message is that God is holy and requires His people to be holy. The book also shows that God graciously provides atonement for sin through the shedding of blood. Most Jews and Christians recognise Moses as the author, writing sometime after the giving of the Law (about 1445 B.C.).

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

LEVITICUS 1:1-2

The Tent of Meeting.

- **Leviticus 1:1-2:** The LORD called Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, ²"Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of livestock from the herd or from the flock.

This entire chapter is focused on burnt offerings, but before we start it should be mentioned that they did not originate here in Leviticus, but are found early in the Book of Genesis as the following shows:

- Noah offered the first burnt offering of all the clean animals and birds after the flood waters had subsided. (Gen. 8:20).
- Abraham offered up Isaac for a burnt offering (Gen. 22:1-13), but God provided a ram for the burnt offering in place of Isaac.
- Moses told Pharaoh that Israel must take their cattle with them into the wilderness, because they needed to offer them for burnt offerings. (Exod. 10:25-26).
- Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, offered a burnt offering to God Exod. 18:12).
- The Israelites offered up burnt offerings in the wilderness. (Exodus. 20:24) (Exodus 24:5).
- When the Israelites worshipped the golden calf, they offered up burnt offerings as a part of their false worship. (Exod. 32:6).

The book of Leviticus very meticulously details the laws for burnt offerings, perhaps because Israel had abused the practise of burnt offerings.

The tent of meeting: (v1) refers to the tabernacle of Moses. The word tabernacle means testimony and witness, it can refer to the tabernacle itself and to Moses who was a witness and testimony of God before the people. Through the book of Exodus, "The LORD went before the people of Israel by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. (Exod. 13:21-22), but there was no tabernacle built until Exodus chapter seventeen. It was given the following titles:

- The tent of meeting (Num. 18:4, 6, 21, 22)
- The tent of the testimony. (Num. 17:2, 7, 8)
- The sanctuary (Num. 18:1, 3, 5).

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The Tent of Meeting is the Holy Place not the Most Holy Place (Exod. 27:21). Moses would pitch the tent outside the camp and a long way from it, he called it the tent of meeting, because everyone who sought the LORD would go outside the camp to the tent of meeting. Whenever Moses went to the tent all the people would stand at their tent door and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent, when he entered the tent the pillar of cloud would descend and at the entrance of it, then the LORD would speak with Moses face to face (from the pillar of cloud) as a man speaks to his friend. When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, they would stand at their tent door and worship and when Moses came back to the camp, his assistant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would remain at the tent of meeting. (Exod. 33:1-23)

The layout of the tabernacle: the tabernacle was divided into two sections the first section was called the Holy Place the second section was called the Most Holy Place and the court surrounding the tabernacle was called the outer court. The entry into the outer court and the entry into the tabernacle faced east. When the people of Israel entered the gate into the outer court the first thing they would see was the brazen altar for sacrifices and burnt offerings, behind this was the basin for the priests to wash their hands and feet before ministering and behind the basin was the tabernacle itself. Behind the first curtain of the tabernacle (the entry into the Holy place) on the left was the golden lampstand and on the right the table of shewbread. The altar of incense was also in the Holy Place in front of the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy place and the Ark of the Covenant was behind this curtain in the Most Holy Place. The sweet-smelling aroma of the incense would drift over the curtain and into the Most Holy Place.

Offerings of livestock: (v1) according to a person's prosperity they could bring a bull, sheep or bird offering. The offerings in focus here are sin offerings, we know this because verse four states that this offering will make atonement for those who are offering it.

LEVITICUS 1:3-9

Laws for the Burnt Offering of a Bull.

- **Leviticus 1:3-9:** "If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. ⁴He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. ⁵Then he shall kill the bull before the LORD, and Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the blood and throw the blood against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. ⁶Then he shall flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces, ⁷and the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. ⁸And Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head, and the fat, on the wood that is on the fire on the altar; ⁹but its entrails and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

The design of the brazen altar of burnt offering: -

- The altar sat in the outer court outside of the tent of meeting.
- It was a large square box with four walls made of acacia wood.
- Each wall was five cubits (approximately 7½ ft., or 2.3 meters) and its height three cubits (approximately 4½ or 1.3 meters).
- On each corner was four horns.
- It was hollow on the inside with a network of bronze grating set halfway down.
- It had four bronze rings on each of its four corners set halfway down, poles of acacia wood overlaid with bronze were placed through these rings and used to carry the altar.
- The altar had its own bronze pots and shovels for removing the ashes and its own basins forks and pans for burning the sacrifice in the fire. (Exod. 27:1-8).

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Flay: (Lev. 1:6) comes from the Hebrew word (*pashat*), which in the context of animals means to spread out, and remove, strip or peel off the skin of an animal (usually when they are dead) to prepare it for cooking.

Entrails (Inwards in KJV): (Lev. 1:9) the word inwards comes from the Hebrew word (*qereb*), which means bowels, heart, inward part and within self. It carries the idea of the nearest part (i.e. the center). The word entrails from the English Dictionary refers to a person's or animal's intestines or internal organs, especially when removed or exposed. It refers to the inner most part of something and embraces the bowels, the guts and the vital internal organs especially the intestines of a person or animal.

NOTE: all sacrificed animals became food for the Levitical priesthood, except for those animals whose blood was taken into the temple, these animals could not be eaten.

Laws for the burnt offering of a bull: (Lev. 1:3-9), if the owner was offering a bull for a burnt offering he was to:

- Bring the bull for the burnt offering to the entrance of the tent of meeting, where he may be accepted before the LORD. (Lev. 1:3).

- Lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it would be accepted for him to make atonement for him. (Lev. 1:4).
- Kill the bull before the LORD (i.e., before the tent of meeting).
- Aaron's sons the priests were then to take the blood and throw it against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. (Lev. 1:5).
- The owner of the animal was then to flay (strip the skin off) the burnt offering and cut it into pieces. (Lev. 1:6). (i.e., separate the head, the fat, the legs and entrails). (v9).
- Aaron's sons were then to arrange wood on the altar and start the fire. (Lev. 1:7) and then arrange the pieces of the burnt offering on the altar. (Lev. 1:8).
- The head and the fat were to be put on top of the wood that was on the fire on the altar. (Lev. 1:8).
- The priest was to wash the entrails (innards) and its legs with water (Lev. 1:9) and then burn all the animal (the head, the fat, the legs and entrails) on the altar, as a burnt offering. (Lev. 1:9).

A pleasing aroma to the LORD: (Lev. 1:9) this was a burnt and food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD, not that the burnt offering was a sweet savour, for it would more likely cause a stink, but because it was offered in obedience according to the word of the LORD, it manifested the inward faithfulness and devotion of the one offering it, and for this reason it is said to be a pleasing aroma to the LORD. It signifies Christ offering up himself to God as a sweet-smelling fragrance.

- Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Ephes. 5:2).

And of faithful believers offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.

- You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:5).

Spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God in this context embraces:

- Faithfulness and obedience toward God, acts of self-sacrifice for the Lord Jesus Christ and sharing the Gospel.
- Showing love, mercy, forgiveness, compassion and such like things to others.
- Doing all that one can do to fulfil Jesus command, "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31), meaning do good to others and not harm. James Jesus brother calls this command of Jesus, "the royal law." (James 2:8).
- Sacrificing money, time, possession and labour for the extension of Christ's Kingdom.

Figuratively speaking, all these ascend-up to heaven as a fragrant aroma to God (Ephes. 5:2) and those who practice these things are accepted before the LORD as a sweet-smelling savour.

LEVITICUS 1:10-13

Laws for the Burnt Offering of a Male Sheep or Goat.

- **Leviticus 1:10-13:** "If his gift for a burnt offering is from the flock, from the sheep or goats, he shall bring a male without blemish, ¹¹and he shall kill it on the north side of the altar before the LORD, and Aaron's sons the priests shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar. ¹²And he shall cut it into pieces, with its head and its fat, and the priest shall arrange them on the wood that is on the fire on the altar, ¹³but the entrails and the legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer all of it and burn it on the altar; it is a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

Laws for a sheep or goat burnt offering: (Lev. 1:10-13), following are the laws for a burnt offering of a sheep or goat.

- The sheep or goat had to be a male without blemish from Israel's flock. (Leviticus 1:10).
- The person offering it had to kill the animal before the LORD on the north side of the altar, then Aaron's sons the priests were to throw its blood against the sides of the altar. (Leviticus. 1:11).
- After this, the person offering the animal was to cut it into pieces (i.e., separate its head, its fat, the legs and entrails). The priest was then to arrange the head and the fat, on top of the wood that was on the fire on the altar and wash the entrails and the legs with water then burn all the animal (i.e., the head, the fat, the entrails and legs) on the altar. (Leviticus 1:12-13).

This was a burnt and food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. (Lev. 1:13). For information explaining this expression, see the title: "A pleasing aroma to the LORD," following (v3-9) (above).

LEVITICUS 1:14-17

Laws for the Burnt Offering of Turtledoves and Pigeons.

- **Leviticus 1:14-17:** "If his offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves or pigeons. ¹⁵And the priest shall bring it to the altar and wring off its head and burn it on the altar. Its blood shall be drained out on the side of the altar. ¹⁶He shall remove its crop with its contents and cast it beside the altar on the east side, in the place for ashes. ¹⁷He shall tear it open by its wings, but shall not sever it completely. And the priest shall burn it on the altar, on the wood that is on the fire. It is a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

Laws for turtledoves or pigeons for a burnt offering: (Lev. 1:17), following are the laws for a burnt offering of turtledoves or pigeons.

- The one offering the turtledove or pigeon was to take the bird to the priest who was to bring it to the altar and wring its head off and burn the head on the altar and drain the birds blood out on the side of the altar. (Lev. 1:14-15).
- Then the one offering the bird was to remove its crop with its contents and cast them in the place for ashes on the east side of the altar. Then without completely severing the body of the bird tear it open by its wings. After this the priest was to burn the turtledove or pigeon on top of the wood that was on the fire. (Leviticus 1:16-17).

This was a burnt and food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. (Lev. 1:17). For information explaining this expression, see the title: "A pleasing aroma to the LORD," following (v3-9) (above).

GENERAL LAWS FOR BURNT OFFERINGS

The title burnt offering: does not apply to any specific offering, but to all offerings that are burnt on the altar. The following notes evidence this truth.

Burnt offerings were to be offered:

- Every day in the morning and evening. (Exodus 29:38-42) (Numbers 28:3-6) (2 Chronicles 2:4).
- Each Sabbath Day (Num. 28:9-10).
- At the beginning of each month (Num. 28:11).
- At the celebration of Passover on the 14th day of the 1st month (Numbers 28:16).
- At the new grain offering at the Feast of Weeks (Num. 28:26-27).
- At the Feast of Trumpets, on the sacred day in the 7th month (Numbers 29:1-2).
- At the celebration of the new moon (Num. 29:6).

Burnt offerings were often offered with another sacrifice such as:

- The guilt offering. (Lev. 5:7) (Lev. 5:10).
- The sin offering. (Lev. 5:7) (Lev 6:25) (Lev 9:2-3).
- The freewill and vow offering. (Lev. 22:18).
- The sheaf offering. (Lev. 23:12).
- The new grain offering. (Lev. 23:16-18).

A burnt offering was required for the cleansing of:

- A woman's uncleanness due to child-bearing. (Lev. 12:6-8).
- A leper. (Lev. 14:19-20).
- A man with a discharge. (Lev. 15:14-15).
- A woman with an abnormal discharge. (Lev. 15:30).
- A Nazarite who was unintentionally defiled by contact with a dead body. (Numbers 6:11).
- When the congregation unwittingly failed to observe one of God's commands. (Numbers 15:22-26).
- The purification of Aaron. (Lev. 16:3) (Lev. 16:5).
- The purification of the Levites. (Num. 8:12).

In addition to these there were special times when the burnt offering was appropriate and times when the burnt offering could be offered voluntarily, evidencing that all offerings burnt on the brazen altar in the outer court were called burnt offerings, which means that all offerings whether they are an animal or grain offering are classed as burnt offerings. Further laws concerning burnt offerings:

- All offering had to come from Israel's own herd or flock. (Lev. 1:2).
- Burnt offerings from the herd were to be a male without blemish. (Lev. 1:3).
- An offering from the herd refers to a bull without blemish. (Leviticus 1:3-5).
- An offering from the flock refers to a male sheep (i.e., ram) or goat without blemish. (Lev. 1:10).

- The animal being offered had to be of the highest quality, not a diseased, sick, aging or useless animal.
- The person offering the animal had to kill the animal in front of the tent of meeting and cut it up themselves according to the laws of the burnt offering.
- In all burnt offerings the one making the offering had to skin the animal themselves (they could keep the skin for clothing and other uses) and cut the animal into pieces according to the law of burnt offerings (i.e., cut off its head, the fat, the legs and cut out its entrails).
- If the burnt offering was a bull, a sheep (i.e., ram) or a goat they had to skin the animal, and cut off its head, the fat, the legs and cut out its entrails) and then give all the pieces of the animal to the priest to burn on the altar. (Lev. 1:9, 11).
- If the burnt offering was a turtledove or pigeon the one offering the bird was to remove its crop with its contents and cast them in the place for ashes on the east side of the altar and without completely severing the body of the bird tear it open by its wings (Lev. 1:14-17) and then give the turtledove or pigeon to the priest to burn on the altar (Leviticus 1:14-17).

NOTE: it seems that only men were involved in the burnt offering, since it would be unseemly for a woman to be standing before the tent of meeting skinning and gutting an animal, especially a bull, no doubt fathers and husbands would make the offering on behalf of their families, and should there be no father or husband, due to sickness or war, and elder son or near kinsman would most likely be chosen.

LAWS FOR THE BURNT OFFERING

- Aaron and his sons were commanded to place the burnt offering on the fire on the altar and keep it burning all night until the morning. (Lev.6:9): (Lev.6:13).

The priest was to carry out the following rituals:

- Arrange the wood and the burnt offerings on the altar and burn the fat of the peace offerings every morning. (Lev.6:12), since people would have been continually bringing various offerings, especially during the seven-day Feasts.
- Put on his linen under garment and his outer linen garment. (Lev.6:10).
- Take up the ashes to which the fire had reduced the burnt offering on the altar and put them beside the altar. (Lev.6:10).
- Take off his under and outer linen garments and put on other garments and leave the offering on the altar and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. (Lev.6:11).
- Keep the fire on the altar continually burning so that it would not go out. (Lev.6:12).
- Continually burn wood on the altar every morning so that the fire would not go out. (Lev.6:13).
- Arrange the burnt offering on the altar and burn the fat of the peace offerings on top of the burned offering. (Lev.6:12).

Summary: the burnt offering was to be burnt all night on the altar with the fat of the peace offerings placed on the top of it so that it would be utterly consumed by the fire, then in the morning its ashes were to be removed, while the fire on top of the grate of the brazen altar of burnt offerings was kept burning.

A memorial portion: (i.e., a handful) of many burnt offerings was taken from the whole burnt offering. This memorial portion was totally consumed by fire on the altar as an offering to the LORD, the rest of the offering was given to the priests for food.

Three types of animals to be sacrifice in burnt offerings.

1. A bull from the herd.
2. A sheep or goat from the flock.
3. Turtledoves or pigeons.

Animals without blemish: the animal to be offered in the burnt offering was always to be of the highest quality (i.e., without blemish).

Personal involvement in the sacrifice: the person offering the animal was involved in the process of sacrifice. They killed the animal and cut into its pieces (i.e., cut off its head, its legs, its fat and separated its entrails (i.e., innards), while the priest handled the sprinkling of its blood and its burning on the altar of sacrifice. If it was a grain offering the person offering it, prepared it and then gave it to the priest. This personal involvement would have made an impression on the mind of the one who was offering the sacrifice and if it was a sin offering would have impressed upon them the seriousness of their sin before the LORD, especially when the offering involved the killing a valued animal.

Identification with the sacrificed animal: if the burnt offering was to make atonement for the sin the person offering it was to identify with the animal, by laying their hands on its head, so that when they killed the innocent animal and saw the blood flow from its body and watched it die for their sins the seriousness of what they had done would impact upon their mind and the truth that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins would firmly establish the following truth amongst the people of Israel.

- Under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (Heb. 9:22).

Unknown sins: many burnt offerings were made for sins the individual had not realised they had committed, but later became aware of which highlights the following two truths

1. We are all sinners before the LORD whether we are aware of it or not.
2. We must all accept God's plan of salvation to be counted worthy of eternal life.

The purpose of burnt sin offerings: the burnt offering for sin served the following three purposes:

1. It reminded the sinner of their fallen state before the LORD.
2. It brought atonement and forgiveness to the sinner
3. It reminded the people of Israel of their sinful state and enforced upon their mind that the LORD'S divine solution for mankind's fallen condition and the path to forgiveness is not through good works, but by the shed blood of an innocent animal, which not only highlighted the seriousness of sin before the LORD, but also echoes the Saviour who was crucified without sin, being sacrificed for those with sin.

Two lessons to learn from burnt offerings: following are two lessons we can learn from burn offerings:

1. God is pleased to accept and forgive anyone who comes to Him through His prescribed sacrifice. (Lev. 1:3).
2. Believers must be involved in the offering of the sacrifice; it is not all the work of the priest.

Burnt offerings and the ancient Israelite: the Israelites of Moses' day could not interpret burnt offerings, in terms of its future fulfillment, like Christians can today but only in the light of what God had already said and done and of what they already knew about them. For them the death and resurrection of Jesus was a future event, whereas it is a past event for Christians today, because of this there is a tendency for us to impose our viewpoint and interpretation upon the understanding of the Israelites of old by supposing they understood the meaning of burnt offerings and sacrifices in the light of what we now clearly understand of Christ. Leviticus chapter one informs the ancient Israelites how the burnt offerings were to be offered, not what they meant. To understand what burnt offerings meant to the Israelites we need to focus upon what had been revealed concerning them prior to the laws given in Leviticus. Following are two keys that help us understand what burnt offerings meant to the ancient Israelites:

1. The first key is to be found in the burnt offerings of Noah in Genesis chapter eight. After the flood in Genesis chapter eight had destroyed all life on earth (except for what was in the ark) and after the water has subsided, we read:
 - Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. ²²While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." (Genesis 8:20-22).

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The following shows the relationship between these verses and Leviticus:

- The expression burnt offering in (Gen. 8:20) is the same as that in Leviticus chapter one.
- Clean animals and birds are offered by Noah (Gen. 8:20), the laws of Leviticus define the difference between what is clean and what is not.
- Noah's offering is said to be a soothing aroma to God (Gen. 8:21) and in Leviticus an expression like that is found frequently found, especially in Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17).

The sacrifice which Noah offered was the basis for the covenant promise that God would never again destroy every living thing by a flood again.

- When the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. (Genesis 8:21).

This promise was not because all sin had been destroyed from the face of the earth which is very clearly seen in Noah and his family not long after the flood, and God afterward says, "the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21) and God told Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people." (Exod. 32:9). The basis for God's promise to Noah is not the goodness of man, for man's depravity is specifically stated, rather the basis for God's covenant

promise is the result of the burnt offering offered up by Noah. This means that the Israelites saw that the burnt offering was a means of avoiding God's wrath and of obtaining God's favour. The Israelites of Moses day understood that God's blessing and favour toward them was not the because of their good works, but because of the burnt offering.

2. The second key is found in the burnt offering of Abraham in Genesis chapter twenty-two in which God said to Abraham:

- Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you. (Genesis 22:2).

We know that Abraham did as God commanded him and from the New Testament accounts know that Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son because he believed that God would raise him from the dead (Rom. 4:19-21) (Heb. 11:19). God stopped Abraham from slaying his son and provided a ram in his place. (Gen. 22:13). This story of the offering up of Isaac as a burnt offering taught the Israelites that the following promise and blessing that the LORD gave to Abram:

- Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3).

Symbolised the following two things:

1. The death and resurrection of Abraham's son.
2. That the sacrificial animal offered in burnt offerings died in place of the person offering it. Abrahams son Isaac did not die because God provided an animal to take his place. So, when the Israelite placed their hand on the head of the sacrificial animal, they would have known that the animal was dying in their place, just as the ram died in the place of Isaac.

Though the sacrificial death of Jesus was obscured to the ancient Israelites, it is nevertheless most likely that they would have been aware that the death of Isaac, which was prevented by the sacrifice of the ram in the burnt offering, prophetically symbolised that something greater would mysteriously take place in the future. This of course is now clear to New Testament believers, but until the purpose of the burnt offering was made known as it is to us today, when the Israelites of old offered up their burnt offering, they would have understood it to mean that God's wrath would be avoided, and His favour, blessings and forgiveness would be received.

BURNT OFFERINGS AND NEW TESTAMENT

Burnt offerings and New Testament believers: though much of the symbolism of the burnt offering and its ultimate future fulfilment in the Lord Jesus Christ was obscured to the ancient Israelites the following words that John the Baptist spoke, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" when he saw Jesus coming toward him (John 1:29), show that he understood from the beginning of Lord's ministry that Jesus was the fulfilment of the burnt offering.

John tells us that he did not know this truth, until God told him, that the one who he sees the Spirit descend upon and remain, is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. (John 1:33). Jesus came as the Lamb of God and died "once for all" which means there is no longer any need for burnt offerings, he is the ultimate and final fulfillment of the burnt offerings sacrificed for sin.

The application of burnt offering to New Testament believers today: the burnt offering (and the others) signified in advance the Lord Jesus Christ the ultimate burnt offering and symbolized to the Israelites of the Old Testament, that God's provision for their sins and for their access to God is now through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and not sacrifices. During the Old Testament Israel's faith and obedience that the burnt offerings symbolized, failed to be manifested when their offering of them deteriorated to legalistic ritualism. When this happened the prophets strongly rebuked the Israelites for their lack of faith and hypocrisy. The following words of Micah is a good example of the prophets' rebukes to the priests and the nation as a whole:

- With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" ⁸He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:6-8).

To receive forgiveness of sins Christians no longer need to bring a lamb to the altar but set their faith upon the true Lamb of God the Lord Jesus Christ and offer a sacrifice of praise for God's love and grace in Christ and keep His commandments. The same principles the Old Testament sacrifices taught the Israelite still apply today, following are a few of these principles:

1. **Mankind's sinfulness before God:** the burnt offerings highlight the principle of mankind's sinfulness before God. God Himself said, "the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth." (Gen. 8:21). when an Israelite wanted to approach God, to worship Him and be accepted by Him, they had to come with a burnt offering, to make provision for their sinfulness. This same principal principle applies to Christians today when we want to approach God, to worship Him and be accepted by Him, we must come through faith in Christ whose blood makes provision for our sinfulness. Though Jesus died for our sins, once for all, we will not be free from sin's influence until we are in the presence of God, with transformed immortal bodies. Our present sinful condition is the reason why we must die, and to enter-into heaven in a different form (1 Cor. 15).

2. **The way to approach God:** the burnt offerings emphasize the principle that God is very particular about the way mankind is to approach Him. Fallen mankind desires to approach God in their own way, but the burnt offerings show that God does not allow anyone to approach Him according to their own ways, but only in accordance to the ways He established. Old Testament Israelites could only approach God by means of the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the sacrifices. Today, we can only come to God through the Lord Jesus Christ, who came as the sacrificial Lamb and opened the way of grace for us of approach God by dying for our sins. Jesus himself said: -

- I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6).

Whoever desires to approach God and be forgiven of their sins and forever dwell in His presence can only do so through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died in our place, there is no other way that is acceptable to God.

3. **Acceptance with God:** today there is a great emphasis on self-acceptance, and self-esteem, of which most is worldly orientated, because worldly self-esteem looks inward for acceptance, it teaches that for a person to feel good about themselves they must look for the good which is in them. In contrast to this the Bible teaches that for any of us to live a spiritually healthy life we must seek God's acceptance and not our own. Those who take an honest look within themselves will see that they are riddled with all sorts of sinful dysfunctions and

aberrations, (i.e., jealously, anger, lustful thoughts, selfishness, envy, drunkenness just to name a few). This, is why God's word tells us that we are not good in and of ourselves but must look for God's favour which is not dependent upon anything within ourselves, but upon faith in God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Today some religions declare a mistaken message that proclaims before a person can love God, they must first love and feel good about themselves, because it is only when we can love ourselves that we are able to love God. But this is totally contrary to the Bible's teaching, it matters not how much someone loathes themselves, when they experience God's forgiveness, love and grace in Christ toward them they not only deeply love God, but also begin to love themselves and change for the better. God's approval and His love should be our highest goal (especially since He is our creator), and not our own self-love and our own approval or the approval of others.

4. **Burnt offerings and atonement:** Old Testament burnt offerings teach the principle of atonement, and that the only way that mankind's sinful and fallen nature can be dealt with is by the shedding of innocent blood, firstly, the blood of a sacrificial animal without blemish and secondly and finally the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ the Lamb of God without blemish.
5. **Identification:** burnt offerings teach the principle that the one who was to benefit from the death of the sacrificial animal had to identify with that animal. To achieve this identification the person making the offering had to:
 - Have raised the animal themselves or purchased it.
 - Placed their hand upon the head of the sacrificial animal, symbolically identifying themselves with the animal.
 - Killed the animal themselves in front of the tent of meeting, before the LORD.

If the person did not identify themselves with the sacrificial animal in this way, the sacrificial animal had no benefit to the person offering it. Likewise, Christians today are to personally identify themselves with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection through water baptism. Though baptism in water does not save us, it is the way that God has ordained for us to personally identify with Christ and his family and enter-into his Kingdom.

6. **Sacrifice:** in burnt offerings a valued animal was given up to God illustrating the principle of sacrifice. Firstly, the life of an innocent victim must be sacrificed for the guilty, and secondly, the life of those who walk with God will involve sacrifice. True disciples are those who count the cost of discipleship and willingly and happily sacrifice all that stands before them and God and all that would hinder them from faithfully following Christ.

MALE AND FEMALE ANIMALS

The following verses show that in the case of offerings for sin a ruler had to bring a male goat without blemish, but an ordinary person was to offer only a female goat without blemish (4:22-31).

- When a leader sins, doing unintentionally any one of all the things that by the commandments of the LORD his God ought not to be done, and realizes his guilt,²³ or the sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring as his offering a goat, a male without blemish. (Lev. 4:22-23).
- If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally in doing any one of the things that by the LORD'S commandments ought not to be done, and realizes his guilt,²⁸ or the sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring for his offering a goat, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed. (Lev. 4:27-28).

Some feel that female animals had greater value than male animals, because the female was not only a continual provider of milk and its by-products, but also spent long lengths of time carrying new livestock. Others feel that male animals had greater value than female animals, because the male, was the more expensive animal due to the fact he could reproduce many offspring from many females, whereas the female was limited to producing (normally) one offspring. Perhaps the symbolism is not in the value or worth of the animal, but in the fact that a leader should be the stronger in faith and knowledge and therefore it was appropriate that they should sacrifice the male since it was the stronger of the two animals.

OLD TESTAMENT WORSHIP AND SACRIFICES

Old Testament worship and sacrifices: Old Testament worshippers did not just listen to the minister and sing a few hymns; they were actively involved in the worship. Every individual believer had to choose an animal without blemish (which means it was a highly valued animal), from their own flock, and bring it to the temple where they would kill and dismember it with their own hands, then offer it to the priest and watch it go up in smoke before them. They had faith that by their sacrifice God's favour would be toward them and if they had sinned their relationship with God would be restored. The following words that John the Baptist spoke when he saw Jesus coming toward him:

- Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29).

Show that the depravity of man's sinfulness in general, as well as the sinfulness of specific sins were dealt with by the Old Testament sacrifices and now by Christ as the Lamb of God the ultimate fulfillment of Old Testament burnt offerings.

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As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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