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LEVITICUS

The Burnt Offering

1 Then the LORD summoned Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting: ² “Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When any of you brings an

offering to the LORD from the livestock, you ³ may bring your offering from the herd or the flock.

³ **1:2** Or LORD, from the livestock you

A Principle to Live By - Open Communication

#1 Spiritual leaders must make sure they communicate all of God’s truth to those they lead in order to avoid any abuse of power.

At least 35 times throughout Leviticus, we read that “the LORD spoke to Moses” and in 15 out of 27 chapters, the Lord commanded His servant to communicate His words to the children of Israel.

Though at times Moses was to address only the spiritual leaders, in most instances he was to speak to all the children of Israel (cp. Lv 4:2; 7:23,29; 12:2; 6:9,25; 10:8; 13:1). This was important because when the populace relied on Moses or the priests to tell them how to atone for their sins, it placed them at the mercy of their religious leaders. Having so-called exclusive knowledge can create a serious abuse of power and position.

Unfortunately, church history is filled with examples where this principle of open communication has been violated. For example, some religious leaders would not allow their followers to read the Bible on their own. This has led to horrible manipulation and doctrines that violate the clear teachings of the Scriptures.

Those who are responsible to teach the Word of God today are to communicate the whole plan of God to all the people and encourage them to read the Bible themselves. Paul affirmed that he had done just that when he preached in Ephesus:

Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of everyone’s blood, for I did not shrink back from declaring to you the whole plan of God. (Ac 20:26-27)

Reflection and Response

How have some Christian leaders purposely led people astray, and how can the church avoid this abuse of power and still honor and respect those charged with leadership responsibilities? (See 1Sm #41: Respect Plus Accountability, p. 385.)



³ “If his gift is a *burnt offering from the herd, he is to bring an unblemished male. He must bring it to the entrance to the tent of meeting so that he ^b may be accepted by the LORD. ⁴ He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering so it can be accepted on his behalf to make *atonement for him. ⁵ He is to slaughter the bull before the LORD; Aaron’s sons the priests are to present the blood and sprinkle it on all sides of the altar that is at the entrance to the tent of meeting. ⁶ Then he must skin the burnt offering and cut it into pieces. ^c ⁷ The sons of Aaron the priest will prepare a fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. ⁸ Aaron’s sons the priests are to arrange the pieces, the head, and the suet on top of the burning wood on the altar. ⁹ The offerer must wash its entrails and shanks with water. Then the priest will burn all of it on the altar as a burnt offering, a fire offering of a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

¹⁰ “But if his gift for a burnt offering is from the flock, from sheep or goats, he is to present an unblemished male. ¹¹ He will slaughter it on the north side of the altar before the LORD. Aaron’s sons the priests will sprinkle its blood against the altar on all sides. ¹² He will cut the animal into pieces ^d with its head and its suet, and the priest will arrange them on top of the burning wood on the altar. ¹³ But he is to wash the entrails and shanks with water. The priest will then present all of it and burn it on the altar; it is a burnt offering, a fire offering of a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

^b **1:3** Or it

^c **1:6** Lit its pieces

^d **1:12** Lit its pieces

A Principle to Live By - The Lamb of God

#2 To inherit eternal life, we must put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who sacrificed His life as a perfect, unblemished offering for our sin.

Throughout the book of Leviticus, sacrificial offerings were to be without blemish. Clearly, this pointed to God's plan in offering His Son as a once-for-all sacrifice for the sins of the world. When Jesus Christ walked among His fellow human beings, He was both perfect God and perfect man. He was the unblemished sacrificial Lamb (Heb 9:11-14; 10:8-10). (See Heb #14: The Blood of Christ, p. 1718.)

John the Baptist saw this connection when he first met Jesus Christ. He called out, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn 1:29). The apostle Peter elaborated on this powerful metaphor:

For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from the fathers, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. (1Pt 1:18-19) (See Rv #16: The Blood of the Lamb, p. 1794.)



Reflection and Response

Why did Jesus Christ have to be perfect God and a perfect man to be our Savior from sin?

¹⁴ "If his gift to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, he is to present his offering from the turtledoves or young pigeons.^a ¹⁵ Then the priest must bring it to the altar, and must twist off its head and burn it on the altar; its blood should be drained at the side of the altar.

^a 1:14 Or or pigeons

¹⁶ He will remove its digestive tract,^b cutting off the tail feathers, and throw it on the east side of the altar at the place for ashes. ¹⁷ He will tear it open by its wings without dividing the bird. Then the priest is to burn it on the altar on top of the burning wood. It is a burnt offering, a fire offering of a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

^b 1:16 Or its crop, or its crissum

A Principle to Live By - Lord of All

#3 As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are to feel free to enter God's holy presence, regardless of our gender or our ethnic and economic backgrounds.

God never shows favoritism. He has provided a redemptive plan for all people. For example, in their day, Mary and Joseph represented a poor family. When they came to Jerusalem to worship in the temple, they offered a sacrifice involving either "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons" (Lk 2:24). This, of course, was in harmony with what God taught the children of Israel in Leviticus:

But if she doesn't have sufficient means for a sheep, she may take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. Then the priest will make atonement on her behalf, and she will be clean. (Lv 12:8; see also 5:7-13.)

This truth applies to both Jews and Gentiles. Following Peter's encounter with Cornelius, a wealthy Gentile, he wrote,

Now I really understand that God doesn't show favoritism, but in every nation the person who fears Him and does righteousness is acceptable to Him. He sent the message to the Israelites, proclaiming the good news of peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all. (Ac 10:34-36) (See Ac #19: The Sin of Prejudice, p. 1499; Jms #6: Avoiding Prejudice, p. 1732.)



Reflection and Response

Why is prejudice so pervasive throughout the human race?

The Grain Offering

2 "When anyone presents a grain offering as a gift to the LORD, his gift must consist of fine flour. He is to pour olive oil on it, put frankincense on it,^c and bring it to Aaron's sons the priests. The priest

^c 2:1 DSS, Sam, LXX add it is a grain offering

will take a handful of fine flour and oil from it, along with all its frankincense, and will burn this memorial portion of it on the altar, a fire offering of a pleasing aroma to the LORD. ³ But the rest of the grain offering will belong to Aaron and his sons; it is the holiest part of the fire offerings to the LORD.

⁴ “When you present a grain offering baked in an oven, it must be made of fine flour, either unleavened cakes mixed with oil or unleavened wafers coated with oil. ⁵ If your gift is a grain offering prepared on a griddle, it must be unleavened bread made of fine flour mixed with oil. ⁶ Break it into pieces and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering. ⁷ If your gift is a grain offering prepared in a pan, it must be made of fine flour with oil. ⁸ When you bring ^a to the LORD the grain offering made in any of these ways, it is to be presented to the priest, and he will take it to the altar. ⁹ The priest will remove the memorial portion ^b from the grain offering and burn it on the altar, a fire offering of a pleasing aroma to the LORD. ¹⁰ But the rest of the grain offering will belong to Aaron and his sons; it is the holiest part of the fire offerings to the LORD.

^a 2:8 DSS, LXX read *When he brings*

^b 2:9 Lit *portion of it*

¹¹ “No grain offering that you present to the LORD is to be made with yeast, for you are not to burn ^c any yeast or honey as a fire offering to the LORD. ¹² You may present them to the LORD as an offering of *firstfruits, but they are not to be offered on the altar as a pleasing aroma. ¹³ You are to season each of your grain offerings with salt; you must not omit from your grain offering the salt of the covenant with your God. You are to present salt with each of your offerings.

¹⁴ “If you present a grain offering of firstfruits to the LORD, you must present fresh heads of grain, crushed kernels, roasted on the fire, for your grain offering of firstfruits. ¹⁵ You are to put oil and frankincense on it; it is a grain offering. ¹⁶ The priest will then burn some of its crushed kernels and oil with all its frankincense as a fire offering to the LORD.

^c 2:11 Some Hb mss, Sam, LXX, Tg read *present*

A Principle to Live By - Salt of the Earth

#4 We should live godly lives before unbelievers in a way that will cause them to want to know more about what we believe.

Salt was a valuable substance in the ancient world. Since it was used as a preservative, it signified the permanence and eternal nature of the covenant (Nm 18:19; 2Ch 13:5). When it was used with sacrifices, it demonstrated that the children of Israel were to be a preserving influence on the pagan nations around them.

When Jesus delivered His Sermon on the Mount, those listening who were aware of the Levitical laws would understand more clearly what the Savior had in mind when He said, *You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled on by men. (Mt 5:13)* (See Mt #9: Fulfilling the Law, p. 1290.)

Though we may not understand fully all of the symbolism in both the Levitical law and Jesus' statement, one thing seems clear: we are to live our lives in such a way that unbelievers will become aware that we belong to God. Our lives are to be living sacrifices that are enriched with salt.



Reflection and Response

In what specific ways can all of us as believers, both personally and corporately, live our lives so as to be more effective witnesses in this world? (See Jn #28: Modeling Love, p. 1462; Jn #30: God's Sustaining Strength, p. 1465; Jn #33: The Results of Love, p. 1468.)

The Fellowship Offering

3 “If his offering is a *fellowship sacrifice, and he is presenting an animal from the herd, whether male or female, he must present one without blemish before the LORD. ² He is to lay his hand on the head of his offering and slaughter it at the entrance to the tent of meeting. Then Aaron's sons the priests will sprinkle the blood on all sides of the altar. ³ He will present part of the fellowship sacrifice as a fire offering to the LORD: the fat surrounding the entrails, all the fat that is on the entrails, ⁴ and the two kidneys with the fat on them at the loins; he will also remove the fatty lobe of the liver with the kidneys. ⁵ Aaron's sons will burn it on the altar along with the *burnt offering that is on the burning wood, a fire offering of a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

⁶ “If his offering as a fellowship sacrifice to the LORD is from the flock, he must present a male or female without blemish. ⁷ If he is presenting a lamb for his offering, he is to present it before the LORD. ⁸ He must lay his hand on the head of his offering, then slaughter it before the tent of meeting. Aaron's sons will sprinkle its blood on all sides of the altar. ⁹ He will then present part of the fellowship sacrifice as a fire offering to the LORD consisting of its fat and the entire fat tail, which he is to remove close to the backbone. He will also remove the fat surrounding the entrails, all the fat on the entrails, ¹⁰ the two kidneys with the fat on them at the loins, and the fatty lobe of the liver above the kidneys. ¹¹ Then the priest will burn the food on the altar, as a fire offering to the LORD.