

**September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020**  
**Sin and Guilt Offerings**  
**Leviticus 1 – 7**

**BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN**

Sept 6 Ezekiel 23-24	Sept 10 Ezekiel 34-36
Sept 7 Ezekiel 25-27	Sept 11 Ezekiel 37-39
Sept 8 Ezekiel 28-30	Sept 12 Ezekiel 40-42
Sept 9 Ezekiel 31-33	Sept 13 Ezekiel 43-45

**Lesson Introduction:** This week we begin our study of the book of Leviticus. We may not often admit it out loud, but for many people Leviticus is often considered to be difficult, dry, boring, hard to understand, and monotonous. It is one of those books that we may be tempted to skip over in our daily Bible reading plan. Yet we know that **2 Timothy 3:16-17** tells us that **“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”** This is true, which means that Leviticus was given to us by God to train us up in righteousness and equip us for every good work! In fact, one of the mantras of the book of Leviticus is the term, **“The LORD spoke to Moses.”** According to Allan Mosely, author of **Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus In Leviticus**, we see that statement (or some variation of it) 38 times throughout Leviticus (**Mosely, pg. 21**).

So, what is it that the LORD spoke to Moses and is speaking to us today through the book of Leviticus? Some of the themes we will study this week, which set the tone for the book and are carried throughout Leviticus include God’s holiness, our great need for atoning sacrifice, and God’s initiating of a sacrificial system that enables His people to be made right before Him. As we study chapters 1-7 this week, we will see God instituting the sacrificial system. We will consider God’s incredible holiness by contrasting it with our constant sinfulness, while also considering how God has graciously provided the substitutionary atonement that we desperately need to be right with Him.

**FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS:**

- **God initiates relationship with us (1:1-2)**
- **The LORD is Holy in all His ways, while we are sinful by nature (Ch. 4)**

- **The LORD provides atonement for His people (Ch. 1 – 7)**

**Read Leviticus 1 – 7**

**Discussion Section 1: The Initiation of the Sacrificial System (1:1-2)**

-How do we see the sinfulness of Israelites toward the end of Exodus?

-How do we see God’s grace at work in Leviticus 1:1-2?

-Why did God initiate the sacrificial system?

**Excerpt from *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus In Leviticus* by Allan Mosely, pg. 22-23:**

*“After God’s people sinned, what did God do? 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).*

*In the second verse of Leviticus God invites His sinful people into His presence to worship Him by offering sacrifices. God describes five types of sacrifices in the first seven chapters of Leviticus—the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace or fellowship offering, the sin offering, and the guilt or restitution offering. The word translated “bring” in verse 2 is the causative form of the verb that means “draw near.” God was telling His people to draw near to Him and to bring offerings to Him. Even when we turn our backs on God and break His laws, He loves us and pursues us to reconcile us to Himself. That’s the way the book of Leviticus opens. God provides guidelines for sinful people to come into His holy presence. The sacrificial system is God’s invitation for people to meet with Him. The one true and holy God is an inviting God. In Isaiah 55:1-3 God says, ‘Come, everyone who is thirsty, come to the waters; and you without money, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost! Why do you spend money on what is not food, and your wages on*

***what does not satisfy? . . . come to Me . . . that you will live.'***

*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!"*

#### **Discussion Section 2: Unintentional Sins (Ch. 4)**

-What do we learn about the nature of God when we consider that we might unintentionally sin against Him?

-What do we learn about our nature when it comes to sinning unintentionally?

-Why is it important to recognize how different in nature we are from God?

**Note:** The reason the sacrificial system had to exist is because we are sinful, and God is holy. We will see more about how God made atonement for our sins in our final section, but before we talk about the how, it is important to understand why. One of the ways we can begin to understand God's complete holiness and our complete sinfulness is by considering the idea of unintentional sins that is continually referenced specifically in chapter 4.

At the beginning of chapter 4 we see the LORD saying that anyone who sins "***unintentionally***" in any of the LORD's commandments could bring sacrifices to atone for said sins. As we think about the idea of unintentionally sinning, we should first be stirred to consider God's holiness. The Law of Moses (or God's Law) contained 613 commands, some of them being extremely specific (as we will see throughout Leviticus). One of the things we might often wonder when reading through a book like Leviticus is why the LORD had so many specific, detailed commandments. Why did the way they washed themselves matter, or why did it matter if they touched a dead animal? The answer can be understood when we consider God's holiness. His law was meant to point us to just how pure He is. He was creating for Himself a people who were supposed to display His holiness and glory to the world, thus all His commandments were designed to reflect His purity and glory. It is easy to understand then, how sometimes people might unintentionally sin by breaking one of these incredibly detailed commandments. What this teaches us is that even when we are trying to live the

best moral life we can by the letter of the law, we will still sometimes slip up, because God's holy standard is something that we will inevitably fall short of.

The flip side of God's holiness is our sinful nature, which should also come to mind as we consider this idea of unintentionally sinning. The Scriptures are so clear throughout that we are sinners to the core, and that our nature is to sin (***Psalm 51:5, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 3:23, Romans 14:23, Ephesians 2:1-3***). It is easy to unintentionally sin because it is our nature to sin. In other words, we often sin without giving it a second thought, or before we even realize we sinned. Words fly from our mouths when we get cut off in traffic without any premeditation, we yell at our kids or spouses at the drop of a hat, or we engage in gossip before we have even realized we were gossiping. This is not to say that our sins are excusable because sinfulness is our nature, rather it is to point out that even when we are "doing our best," we wind up sinning faster and more often than we care to admit. As we consider God's perfect standard, which is tedious and impossible for us to live up to as sinners, it may become daunting when we consider our relationship to God. If God has this perfect standard, and we are people who sin without even thinking about it (or unintentionally), how can we be right with God? And this is where we can be encouraged from the book of Leviticus, because it points us to the substitutionary, atoning work of Jesus Christ. We will look to this glorious work in closing.

#### **Discussion Section 3: Substitutionary Atonement (1 – 7)**

-What does the word, "***atonement***" mean?

-What does the term, "***substitutionary atonement***" mean?

-What do these first 7 chapters of Leviticus teach us about God's ultimate redemptive plan?

#### **Excerpt from *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus In Leviticus* by Allan Mosely, pg. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27:**

*"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...

God formalized or symbolized atonement for sin in the sacrificial system. In order for sin to be removed, God’s righteous wrath has to be satisfied; death must be the result of sin. The sacrificial system was the means of that death—the animal died because of the worshiper’s sin, God’s wrath was satisfied, and the worshiper could be reconciled to God. That was the reason the worshiper brought the burnt offering to the Lord. Verse 4 says that he brought the animal “to make atonement for him.” There was nothing magical about the animal or the process of killing and burning the animal. What mattered was God’s command to atone for sin in that way and the worshiper’s intent to obey God and to be reconciled to Him by the removal of sin. 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...

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...

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, God said that one day the seed of Eve would strike the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15). The New Testament says that Jesus is that seed. The sacrificial system also foreshadowed the coming of Jesus and His sacrifice. In the old covenant sacrificial system, God taught His requirement of a sacrifice for sin. 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.

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. The Israelites should have been profoundly grateful that the almighty, holy God of the universe was inviting them into His presence. So should we.”