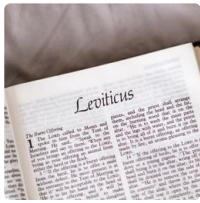


# OpenTheo

## Leviticus 1 - 7 (Part 2)



### Leviticus - Steve Gregg

The acceptability of sacrifices according to the Jewish Law is determined by the character, intentions, and relationship with God of the person offering them, rather than just fulfilling religious obligations. While sacrifices were at the center of Israel's worship life, spiritual leaders realized that the sacrificial system was just a ritual external aspect of religion, and the sacrifices could not eradicate sin. Rather than becoming sacrifices ourselves, we offer spiritual sacrifices, presenting ourselves as living offerings set apart for God's service, accepting the reproach that comes with it.

## Transcript

Let's look at those five offerings again, but not really individually, but more as a group. We talked in our last session about the details of those five offerings. When we covered the tabernacle, we spent a session just talking about the details of the tabernacle without giving it any spiritual application, and then took a separate lecture to talk about the spiritual application.

I'd kind of like to do that now with these sacrifices. We won't be necessarily reading the passages in Leviticus again at this point, but looking back at some of the things that were there. Now, the assumption that there is a spiritual application is certainly justified, if nothing else, by the fact that the New Testament gives commentary on this.

There's a lot of New Testament commentary on the sacrificial system. In fact, actually, there's Old Testament commentary on it too, and maybe we should begin just by that, because once the laws were given about the sacrifices in Leviticus, they informed all the later revelation of the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. All of the rest of the Old Testament, the Psalms, the Proverbs, the Prophets, all took for granted that this sacrificial system was the central thing going on in the worship of God in Israel's life.

And likewise, when Jesus came, he came to the Jews at a time when that was still true, and much of what Jesus had to say is relevant to the sacrificial system also. So let's talk about that a little bit. Let's turn to Proverbs.

I have you look at quite a few passages here, but look at Proverbs chapter 15 and verse

8. Now, Solomon is the man who built the temple, and he wrote Proverbs. The temple was built as the more permanent structure to replace the tabernacle, and therefore the temple was the place where the sacrifices were offered. Yet Solomon, who was the builder and establisher of the temple, understood that sacrifices have their place, but they may not have as much of a place as some people might assume.

Many people assume that they could just go out and sin, live a life of sin, and then come offer a sacrifice to God to cover for it. After all, that's what the sacrifices are for, right? Sin offering, trespass offering. The assumption was made by many, just like people make that assumption today, that they can go out and sin all they want and then go to church on Sunday and give their tithe or do their religious thing.

And that covers for all the sins that they've been deliberately committing. But remember, the sins that were offered, the offerings were offered for sins, were for unintentional sins, not for high-handed or rebellious sins against God. And it was not for people, the sacrifices were not for people who were living wicked lives.

They were for people who were worshipers of God, seeking to please God in general, but finding themselves falling into sin, as even good Christians sometimes do. But just as in the Old Testament, so also in the New, God is concerned about the way people live, not just what they do as a religious remedy for their living badly. And in Proverbs 15, verse 8, Solomon said, The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

So God considers it an abomination when these sacrifices are offered by someone who is a wicked person. Now, wicked doesn't just mean a person who is a sinner. Everybody is a sinner.

A wicked person is a person who is living wickedly, living alienated from God, living in rebellion against God. But perhaps try to cover his bases and make sure that he doesn't, you know, die on bad terms with God. He comes and brings the sacrifice to the altar to offer it.

And yet he's a wicked man. He's not repentant. He's not trying to live for God.

His heart isn't the Lord's. He's deliberately sinning as a regular rule in his life. But he brings the sacrifice.

So that's an abomination to God. It's the upright person whose prayer and sacrifice are a delight to God. It's not that of the wicked man.

So this puts the sacrificial system kind of in its perspective in that although you get the impression from Leviticus that sacrifice is extremely important. Well, they have an important place for sure. But there's something more important to God than that.

And so we have coming through much of the Old Testament. Also in Proverbs 21 and verse 27, it says the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination. How much more when he brings it with a wicked intent? So once again, we see that a person's character, a person's heart, a person's intentions, a person's relationship with God is that which makes his sacrifice acceptable or not acceptable.

There's more to it than just going through the ritual. Likewise, in Psalm 40, David more than once made reference to the small place that sacrifices play in God's hierarchy of values. In Psalm 40, verses six through eight, David said, sacrifice an offering you did not desire.

My ears you have opened. Burnt offerings and sin offering you did not require. Then I said, behold, I come in the scroll of the book.

It is written of me. I delight to do your will. Oh, my God, and your law is within my heart.

Now, we know this is quoted in Hebrews chapter 10 as being as if Jesus is the one speaking. That's true of many of the Psalms. In many of the Psalms, David seems to be speaking to the Lord about his own feelings, his own experience.

But the writers of the New Testament recognize that David is a type of Christ. And therefore, what David says about himself is also true of Jesus, maybe even more so. David was, no doubt, talking about himself here as well as the Messiah and basically saying that instead of wanting from David merely sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings, what God wanted was his heart, wanted his ear opened.

Now, when it says, my ear you have opened, of course, we get the impression that means you've kind of made me able to hear, like opening my deaf ears so I can hear, although some feel like the word open should be translated pierced. You pierced my ear. And you might remember under the law that a servant, a Hebrew servant, was to be given his freedom after six years of servitude.

But if he didn't want to be free, if he said, I love my master, I want to stay a servant, then he could have his ear pierced and he'd become a bond servant for life. He'd never be offered his freedom again. So he would make a decision that he wants to serve his master for life and never have the opportunity to be free again.

And that was voluntary. And he'd have his ear pierced as an indication that he had made that decision. And when David says, my ear you have opened, it's possible that it's to be understood, my earlobe you have pierced.

That is to say, I am now your bond servant. I am your willing servant. My heart is surrendered to you.

I'm not just one bringing sacrifices and offerings. I'm one who has your law within my

heart and I delight to do your will. Oh, my God, verse eight says.

Also, a little later, when David had sinned with Bathsheba and he wrote Psalm 51 in the act of expressing his repentance over that act. In Psalm 51, verses 16 and 17, he said, for you do not desire sacrifice or else I would give it. You do not delight in burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart. These are God you will not despise. Now, think of how enlightened David had to be to realize that living at a time when he and all of Israel were living under the law of Moses, the law of Leviticus.

I mean, right there in Jerusalem, there was the priesthood to offer to the sacrifices. And David says, well, but that's not really what God really is excited about. God's not that interested in sacrifices and offerings.

He said that would if that really tickled your fancy, God, I'd bring them to you. But but that wouldn't solve the problem of my sinfulness. What you want is a broken and a contrite and a repentant heart from a sinner.

So David realized that when a person sins, it's not really a sacrifice so much as a broken heart and a repentant spirit that God desires from his people. And therefore, even in the Old Testament, before Jesus even came, some of the more enlightened, inspired spiritual leaders in Israel realized that this sacrificial system that was so central to Israel's worship life was really just more or less a ritual, really just an external thing. And God really was looking at the heart and cared more about that.

Now, that doesn't mean that God wanted them to abandon the sacrificial system at that time. He did not. But it means that they saw that offering sacrifices was of no use whatsoever unless it corresponded with one's heart for God.

I'll just show you what some of the prophets said about this. Then we'll move to the New Testament. In Isaiah chapter one, Isaiah one verses 11 through 13.

God says to what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me, says Yahweh. I have had enough of burnt offering of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls or of lambs or goats.

When you come to appear before me, who is required this from your hand to trample my courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices, incenses and abomination to me. The new moons, the Sabbath and the calling of assemblies. I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred assembly, the sacred meeting.

Now, it sounds like God is saying no more sacrificial system. Let's abolish that. But he doesn't mean that.

He's saying that you guys are committing iniquity and yet coming into the sacred meeting with your sacrifices. And the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to me. Your sacrifices are an abomination, not the whole system.

The sacrificial system is not being renounced here by God. But these people and the sacrifices they're offering are unacceptable to God because they are wicked. He goes on and says their hands are filled with blood from their wicked bloodshed and injustices they've done.

If you turn to Jeremiah chapter 7. Jeremiah 7 verses 22 and 23. He says, for I did not speak to your fathers or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them, saying, Obey my voice and I will be your God and you shall be my people and walk in all my ways that I've commanded you that it may be well with you.

Now, he says, you know, when I first brought you out of Egypt to Mount Sinai, I didn't, you know, immediately give you orders about sacrifices. But immediately what I says, Obey my voice, walk in my ways. See, the first thing God told Israel when they came to Sinai was the Ten Commandments and the need to keep his covenant and obey his voice.

Later, after the priests were ordained, I mean after the tabernacle was erected, I should say, then he gave them commands concerning burnt offerings. But he's saying, first things first, my first priority was never that you offer animal sacrifices. It was always that you be obedient to me and submitted to me.

Look over at the book of Hosea. It's right after Daniel. Hosea chapter 6 and verse 6. God said, for I desire mercy and not sacrifice and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Now, there's sacrifice and burnt offerings. I got this more than that. What I want from you is not so much these things as I want you to know me and I want you to be merciful people.

Actually, the word mercy there is hesed, which is the Hebrew word for covenant faithfulness and loving kindness. And there's a rich word that has a lot of meaning. But the point is, it has to do with character and relationship with God.

And he cares about that more than he cares about their sacrifices and offerings. And by the way, Jesus quoted this verse twice. In Matthew 9, verses 11 through 13, we read.

And when the Pharisees saw that Jesus was with tax collectors and sinners. This is Matthew 9 to 11. When the Pharisees saw it, they said to his disciples, why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said to them, those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

But go and learn what this means. I desire mercy and not sacrifice. He's quoting Hosea 6, 6. He says, for I did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

I desire mercy, not sacrifice. Go and learn what that means. I'm sure they knew the verse, but they never applied it in the way Jesus was applying it.

God cares more about people being merciful than them observing the rituals of the tabernacle. The Pharisees were very studious about rituals, but they were not very careful about being merciful and having compassion on people like Jesus did. And that's the point he's making.

And then in chapter 12 of Matthew, Jesus said, as they were criticizing his disciples for picking grain on the Sabbath. And in Matthew 12, 7, Jesus said, but if you had known what this means, I desire mercy and not sacrifice. You would not have condemned the guiltless.

He's talking to Pharisees again. I told you to go and learn what that means, and you didn't. And if you had gone and learned what that means, you wouldn't make this mistake again.

You're criticizing people for ritual infractions, and you're neglecting the weightier matters of the law. Which, in Matthew 23, 23, Jesus identified. Matthew 23, 23, Jesus said, woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law.

Justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done without leaving the others undone. Notice, you should have kept the rituals.

You were required to do that under the law. That was your obligation. But you should not have left the important things undone.

You should have done both. So Jesus and the prophets, when they criticize people, they're not saying you shouldn't be offering these animal sacrifices. They're saying you should be doing that and doing the more important things too.

Because God desires mercy more than he desires sacrifice. So you ought to be showing mercy and justice and faithfulness. The book of Amos is not very far beyond the book of Hosea.

In Amos, chapter five, verses 21 through 25, Amos says, I hate. God says, I hate. I despise your feast days and I do not savor your sacred assemblies.

So you offer me burnt offering and your grain offering. I will not accept them, nor will I regard your fattened cattle offerings. Take away from me the noise of your song, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.

But let justice run down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream. Did you offer me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness, 40 years old house of Israel? Implying that they didn't. They offered sacrifices, but they didn't.

He's saying, was that really to me that you did that? Or were you thinking about yourselves? He says, I'm looking for you to have justice. I'd rather have mercy than sacrifice. I'm looking for justice to roll down like a mighty stream.

Not your sacrifices. Remember, Jesus said, it's justice and mercy and faithfulness are the things that God values as the weightier matters. Just one other Old Testament passage in the book of Micah.

As we just turn a few pages further through the Old Testament, the book of Micah. Chapter six, we have in chapter six sort of a dialogue between the rebellious people and God himself. And the rebellious people are asking in verses six through seven, what does God require of them? And he answers them in verse eight.

And as they ask, they're being sarcastic. They're basically indicating that God is, you know, he has unreasonable demands. He expects so much of us.

And they ask in verse six, with what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body, for the sin of my soul? I mean, this is getting kind of crazy. Shall I give my own son as a burnt offering for my sins? And the answer is given. He has shown you, O man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you.

But to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Again, the weightier matters of the law that Jesus mentioned. You see, when Jesus talked about the weightier matters of the law, he was just referring to Hosea.

He was referring to Amos. He was referring to Micah. In those passages that talk about the sacrificial system, God already, before Jesus came along, through the prophets, God had said that there's things more important than the sacrificial system.

Yet Jesus did not indicate that there was anything wrong with the sacrificial system. And when Jesus was on earth, his disciples were still living under the Jewish system and still offering sacrifices. He had not yet instituted the new covenant, and so they were still under the law.

And in Matthew 5, Jesus gives these instructions in Matthew 5, verses 23 and 24, says, Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar and you there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, go your way, first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Now notice he said, if you

come and bring an animal to the temple for a sacrifice, but you remember there's a problem between you and your brother, you go fix that person, then come and offer your sacrifice. He was not opposed to offering sacrifices, but if you offer your sacrifice when you're not, when you're neglecting the weightier matters of the law, then you might as well not offer it.

So this is the teaching about sacrifices, putting them in perspective in both the Old and the New Testament. The prophets, the Psalms, and Jesus all saw this particular perspective on the subject. Now, I want to just talk about a variety of lessons that are taught in the sacrificial system as we saw it in chapters 1 through 7 of Leviticus.

And we find in the book of Hebrews sort of a commentary on the book of Leviticus and the sacrificial system. We find other references elsewhere in the New Testament to it as well. And the first thing that we see in Leviticus is the need for a priest.

The people did not come and offer animal sacrifices. They came and presented sacrifices to the priest, and the priest offered them. And that was because the priest was somebody set apart for God, somebody that was holy unto the Lord.

And only somebody who is holy can touch the altar. Only someone who is holy could really administrate worship to God. And so this idea of there needing to be an intermediary, a priest, a holy one, to stand between a holy God and sinners to offer their worship and to make it acceptable to God is seen throughout the entire system.

The priest always has a leading role in all these sacrifices. Now, before this time, you know, Abram could offer a sacrifice, Abel could offer a sacrifice, anybody could offer a sacrifice. But now this system was making it necessary to use a priest.

And therefore, the introduction of a priest is the introduction of a concept of a mediator. Somebody who stands between the sinner and God. And this priest, of course, in some respects is a picture of Christ.

I say in some respects because in some respects it's a picture of us all. Because in the New Testament we are a kingdom of priests, Jesus being the high priest. But still, the idea that there needs to be one who is acceptable, someone who is holy, someone who is clean, who presents the sacrifices, is something that we see in this whole elaborate ritual of the sacrificial system.

And therefore, it points to the need for a priest. And Jesus' priesthood is discussed in some detail in Hebrews 7-10. We won't look at that now because there's too many other things to look at and that's a lot of material to look at.

But the writer of Hebrews brings out that Jesus is a high priest of the order of Melchizedek, a different order of priesthood. But one who actually has a superior priesthood offers superior sacrifices in a superior tabernacle. Nonetheless, the priests of



the Old Testament, in a sense, picture Jesus.

And in another sense, as I said, they picture us all because we have to be holy. We are holy. We are set apart for God too.

And we are to mediate. We are to, in a sense, offer up spiritual sacrifices to God, says the scriptures. And we know those sacrifices include our own bodies, as it says in Romans 12-1.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. We are priests offering a sacrifice. We are also the sacrifice, just as Christ himself.

He is the high priest offering the sacrifice, but he is also the sacrifice to the others. The sacrifice and the priest, both in their own way, represent Christ. And also represent us and our ministrations in the world.

Our role in the world is to offer ourselves to God and our sacrifices to God on behalf of the world. We present ourselves as a living sacrifice. We also offer spiritual sacrifices of other sorts, 1 Peter 2-5.

1 Peter 2-5, again mixing the various metaphors, says we also, as living stones, are built of a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Christ Jesus. To offer up spiritual sacrifices, we are a holy priesthood. And so the priesthood in the Old Testament is a picture of Christ and a picture of us.

Principally Christ the high priest and us the other priests, but every priest, in a sense, in offering up sacrifices is a picture of Christ as well. And it speaks of the need for a priest. It speaks of the fact that the average person who is a sinner cannot just come to God and acceptably offer something.

He has to be clean. Now we are made clean by the blood of Jesus and then we are made priests, just as Aaron and his sons were cleansed by certain sacrifices in chapters 8-10, chapter 8 and 9 especially, which we will look at later on. So we have the priesthood and its relevance is central to this whole section of the animal sacrifices.

And then of course we have one of the primary victims offered as a sacrifice would be the sacrificial lamb. And Christ, we know, is called the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, John 1.29. And so the animal that is offered is also a picture of Christ. The priest is sort of like Christ as the mediator and the animal that is offered is like Christ.

The animal had to be without blemish. It had to be, in other words, a flawless animal. Now Jesus is specifically said to be a lamb without blemish and without spot.

In 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 18 and 19, 1 Peter 1 verses 18 and 19 says, Now Jesus' blood was offered as like the blood of a lamb on the altar. And it said that he was without blemish and without spot. Now a blemish is a birth defect.

Excuse me, it is not. A spot is a birth defect. A blemish is an acquired defect.

Everyone knows this about blemishes because everyone went through their teenage years. Everyone's had pimples. That's a blemish.

A birthmark is something different. A spot on an animal is something it's born with, unless it's a dalmatian, in which case the spots come up a little later. But spotted animals are usually born spotted.

A spotted lamb is born with a spot on it and therefore it would be a defect. And a blemish would be some kind of a flaw that was acquired during its lifetime. And so blemishes and spots really stand for two kinds of sin.

One is the sin in the nature that's born in us. And the other is the sins we commit, our acquired defects by our own ill behavior. Christ lacked both.

He did not have sin apparently in his nature, nor did he ever commit sin. And therefore he was like an unblemished lamb. So the Bible treats it.

And so we also are supposed to be seen that way too. God wants us to be unblemished because we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice to God. In Ephesians chapter 5, it says in verse 27, that Christ gave himself that he might present to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

So that's the Ephesians 5, 27, the church, because of Christ's cleansing, can be without blemish and without spot and can be holy as an offering to God, too, and as a bride. James said in James chapter 1 and verse 27, that pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is this, to visit orphans and widows in their trouble and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. So to remain spotless, to remain unblemished.

This is our duty because we are not only priests, but we are also something being offered up to God. Both Jesus and we are priests and both Jesus and we are sacrifices offered to God. And Jesus was spotless and without blemish we are supposed to be.

Jesus has made us spotless. He gave himself for his bride that she might be without spot, without blemish. That is, he's cleansed our sins, the sins of our nature and the sins of our past and our blemishes.

Obviously, it follows that we are supposed to remain unspotted or unblemished from the world. That's pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father. Now, as far as the way that the sacrifices took care of sin, there was a whole symbolic ritual about that.

That was no doubt intended to be a teaching device to Israel because God knew that Jesus would be coming, of course. The blood of the animals that was sacrificed did not really take away sins, the writer of Hebrews tells us. They just kind of pointed forward to the sacrifice that would.

God knew, I mean, in Revelation Jesus is referred to as the lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world. Before God ever created the world, he knew he was going to be sending Christ as the lamb to be slain for us. And therefore, on the basis of his knowledge that Christ would do that, God could forgive people in advance.

And he could forgive them even without animal sacrifices, because actually the blood of Jesus covered sins past and present. When he died, it justified God in having forgiven people who had sinned before Jesus came. We know that God forgave David for his sin of Bathsheba.

We know that Abraham was justified by faith. And the book of Hebrews, chapter 11, tells us that all those saints in the Old Testament were justified by faith. But how could that be before Jesus came? And some of them, like David, didn't even offer a sacrifice for his sins.

He said, I would offer a sacrifice if you wanted, but that's not what you want. You want a broken spirit. That's what I'll give you.

And so the animal sacrifices were not even essential for the covering of sin. And they were essential as a means that God ordained to prefigure Christ. But they themselves didn't take away sins.

Only Christ does that. In Romans, chapter 3, it appears that Paul is saying that God was able to forgive people in the Old Testament because he knew that Jesus would come and pay the price at a later date. Because it says of Christ in Romans 3, verses 24 and 25, it says that we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Romans 4, 25, whom God set forth to be a propitiation by his blood through faith to demonstrate his righteousness because in his forbearance, God had passed over the sins that were previously committed.

That is previous to Jesus being put forth as a propitiation. God had passed over sins of people like David and Moses and others and had saved them in spite of their sins. But it says that's because he put out Christ ultimately as a propitiation to demonstrate God's righteousness.

He didn't compromise righteousness. He didn't compromise justice by forgiving people in the Old Testament. Those sins that were previously committed, God had passed over them, waiting for Jesus to come and pay for them.

And so there's a connection, of course, between blood, the blood of Jesus, and the

atonement of sins. And in a ceremonial sense, the animal's blood atoned for sin. Not in the ultimate sense of sending a man right with God because a man who was not right with God and didn't want to be and didn't repent could offer an animal sacrifice that wouldn't set him right with God.

Being right with God is a matter of the heart, as we saw earlier. But, you know, it says in Leviticus that the sin offering and the trespass offerings were especially for those whose sins were unintentional. In Leviticus 4.2, it says, speak to the children of Israel, saying that if a person sins unintentionally against any of these commandments of the Lord, then, of course, he can bring the sin offering.

And the same is true about the trespass offering. It talks about their unintentional. In chapter 5, verse 15, if a person commits a trespass and sins unintentionally in regard to the holy things, and so forth.

Now, there was no sacrifice that was made available for people whose sins were rebellious. It was unintentional sins. Actually, in Numbers chapter 15 and verse 30, it says, but the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he's native born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the Lord and he shall be cut off from among his people because he has despised the word of the Lord and he has broken his commandment.

That person should be completely cut off. His guilt should be upon him. This is after it's been talking about the sin offerings.

In Numbers chapter 15, verses 22 through 29, talks about the sin offering for unintentional sin. But then it says in verse 30, but the person who sins presumptuously or with outright rebellion, literally it says with a high hand in the Hebrew, that person won't be forgiven. So under the old covenant, there were no sacrifices offered for people whose sins were outright rebellion.

Now you might say, but aren't all sins kind of outright rebellion? I mean, every time I've sinned, I mean, I kind of knew I was doing the wrong thing most of the time. Well, hopefully that's not true most of the time. Most of the time, if you sin, hopefully it's because you weren't paying attention and didn't intend to sin.

But sometimes we do, even once we're Christians. I knew a man, in fact I debated him on the radio once many years ago. He believed that if a Christian sins again after they've been saved, they're lost and can't ever be saved again.

And of course he based that somewhat on Hebrews chapter 10 and somewhat on Hebrews chapter 6. You know about Hebrews 6, about how it's, you know, if a person goes on sinning after, well, if they fall away, after they've been once enlightened and so forth, once they've been saved, if they fall away, it says it's impossible to renew them to

repentance. But more to the point, Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 26 says that if we go on sinning willfully after we've come to the knowledge of the truth, it says there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation, which will devour the adversaries. So notice Hebrews 10, 26 says, if we sin willfully after coming to the knowledge of truth, there remains no sacrifice for sins.

So this man was pointing out to me that in the Old Testament, God had sin offerings, but only for unintentional sin. And even in the New Testament, he said the sacrifice of Christ is only for unintentional sin. If we sin willfully, even after we're Christians, he felt the sacrifice of Christ is of no further use because the writer of Hebrews says there remains no longer a sacrifice for sin.

This has bothered, of course, a lot of Christians, but I think they're misunderstanding the wording of the passage in Hebrews. When it says there remains no longer a sacrifice for sins, in the context we can see, the writer is saying there is no longer any sacrifice other than that of Christ. He's writing to Jewish people who are thinking about going back to their pre-Christian ways.

What did they do before they were Christians? They were Jews. What do Jews do? They live in sin, and then they go offer a sacrifice in the temple. They live in sin, then they offer a sacrifice in the temple.

They live in sin, then they offer a sacrifice in the temple. They lived a life of sin and counted on temple sacrifices to cover their sins for them. But what he's saying here is if you do that, and this is clear throughout the book of Hebrews, he's writing to Jewish people who have become Christians are now kind of falling back into Judaism.

If you go back to Judaism and go back to your life of sinning willfully, and you think the temple sacrifices are going to help you, they're not. They don't exist anymore. There remains no more sacrifice for sins, meaning other than that of Christ.

If you reject Christianity and hope for the temple sacrifices to help you out, they don't exist anymore as far as God's concerned. Now, how do I know he means that? Because he said exactly the same thing a few verses earlier. In chapter 10 and verse 18, after he has quoted Jeremiah 31 about the new covenant and how God said, I will remember their sins no more.

In Hebrews 10, 18, he says, now where there is remission of these, that is where there's remission of sins in the new covenant, there is no longer an offering for sin. See, there remains no longer a sacrifice. There is no longer an offering.

What it means is once God has established the new covenant, there's no more need for these offerings at the temple. The offerings for sin at the temple have been preempted by a new covenant, and therefore they don't have any validity anymore. They are not

required anymore.

And so if a reader, a Jewish reader who's been a Christian, is thinking about going back to Judaism, he's thinking about going back to a rebellious life against God, because that's, if you reject Christ, what is that but rebellion? You're going back to a willful, sinful life. But you figure you can cover it with your animal sacrifices. No, you can't.

There remains no more sacrifice for sins there. But the sacrifice of Jesus is not canceled. How do I know that? If you look at Acts chapter 13, when Paul is preaching in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, in Acts 13 and verse 39, Paul said, And by Him, Jesus, everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Now Paul says there are things by which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. The law of Moses didn't cover everything. But through faith in Christ we can be justified from all the things, even the things that you couldn't be justified from in the law of Moses.

If the law of Moses didn't have forgiveness of high-handed sin, but only of unintentional sin, well, what are we going to do about intentional sin? Well, by belief in Christ we can be forgiven of that too. All the things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses, you can be justified through Christ. So, the sacrificial system pointed to Christ, but only as an inadequate type, because Christ is much more effective in His sacrifice than the Old Testament sacrifices.

Now, in the sacrificial system in Leviticus we find that repeatedly we're told that the people lay their hand on the head of the animal. This seems to speak of identifying with the animal, and maybe more properly the animal identifying with them. That is, their sins, which are the reason they're coming with a sacrifice in the first place, their disqualification to come before God, to be a worshipper of God at all, is due to their sin.

And the animal is going to die for their sins. The wages of sin is death. And so it is the sins of the people that are transferred to the animal symbolically by the laying on of hands.

The laying on of hands in the Old Testament was something that always signified a transfer. Moses transferred some of his authority to Joshua by laying on of hands. In the New Testament, apostles transferred authority to lead the church to the elders by the laying on of hands.

Healing and the Holy Spirit were administered from Jesus and the apostles through laying on of hands. And also in the sacrificial system, sin was transferred by the laying on of hands. We see that especially in Leviticus 16 and verse 21.

Leviticus 16, 21 says, And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat,

confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all the iniquities to an uninhabited land, and he shall release the goat in the wilderness, where presumably it would be killed by wild beasts. But you see, they laid hands on the animal, confessed the sins, and it's like those sins were symbolically transferred to the goat, then the goat had to bear those sins.

That is apparently what the meaning of the laying on of hands is. Now, it says in 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 21 about Jesus, it says, He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. So we were the sinners and he was the sinless one.

But he became our sin and we became the righteousness of God in him. That's 2 Corinthians 5 verse 21. And so our sins were like transferred to him, not by a literal laying on of hands, but the laying on of hands of the animal was symbolic of that kind of transfer that was actually made in the reckoning of God, of our sins to Christ the Lamb who takes away our sins, like the goat bore the sins and the iniquities of people off when he wandered off.

So Jesus took away and bore away the sins of the world in his own body on the tree. That's what it says in 1 Peter chapter 2 also. In 1 Peter chapter 2, it says of Christ in verse 24, who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree, on the cross, so that we having died the sins might live for righteousness.

So Christ bore our sins upon himself. It says in Isaiah chapter 53, a prediction about Christ. Isaiah 53 verse 6. It says all we like sheep have gone astray.

We have turned everyone to his own way, but the Lord laid on him, on Jesus, the iniquities of us all. So that's what the laying on of a hand on the animal's head represents, the laying of iniquities on the animal from the sinner to an innocent party. The animal is innocent, but it becomes the bearer of sin for the guilty.

And then it suffers the penalty for sin, that is death, instead of the guilty. That's a substitutionary atonement. Jesus bore our sins.

He was innocent. He was a lamb without blemish and without spot, but he became sin for us. He became the sinful one, as it were.

It's rather interesting that when Moses was told to put a brazen snake up on a pole because the children of Israel had been bitten by snakes and were dying. And God said, anyone who looks at this bronze snake will be healed. But Jesus used that as a picture of himself.

In John chapter 3, when Nicodemus was trying to understand how to be born again, Jesus

said, well, it's like when Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. So also the Son of Man must be lifted up, that whosoever believes in him will not perish, but have everlasting life. That's John chapter 3, verse 15.

Well, 14 and 15. So the snake that was lifted up is like Jesus being lifted up. But why would a snake be an image of Christ on the cross? The serpent is more appropriate as a symbol for the devil.

Why would Christ on the cross be represented as a serpent up on a pole? Well, there's more than one possible reason. And I'll talk about when we talk about that passage in Numbers. But it's possible that it's saying that Christ became sin for us when he was crucified.

God put our sins on him, so it was not really like Christ, but the evil that was being crucified there. It was the guilty. He had become guilty not by doing anything wrong, but by taking our guilt upon himself and becoming, you know, someone so evil at that moment that the bearer of all the sins of the world, about as evil as a serpent, could depict.

Well, we see in these sacrifices in the book of Leviticus a frequent reference to blood, the manipulation of the blood by the priest was always a part of the sacrifices, except in the case of the grain offerings, which didn't have any blood, but the other four offerings all involved blood. And we are told that the blood is an important thing in another part of Leviticus. Leviticus chapter 17 is a chapter all about the sanctity of the blood and its importance.

And particularly in Leviticus 17:11, God says, For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls. For it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. That's Leviticus 17:11.

It is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. It's interesting, God says, I have given you the blood on the altar. Actually, the offerer brought the blood to God.

But God says, I'm the one showing the magnanimity here. I'm the one who allows you to present blood to me as an atonement. I've given you this as a means of an atonement.

And of course, in the book of Hebrews, we have the same concept stated in different words by a New Testament writer, but certainly echoing the same sentiments, the same thought that we see there in the 11th chapter or the 17th chapter of Leviticus. In Hebrews chapter 9 and verse 22, well, verse 21 and 22, it says, Likewise, he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And according to the law, almost all things are purged with blood.

And then it says, and without shedding of blood, there's no remission or no forgiveness of sins. No covering, no atonement. And so we see these sacrifices all except the grain



offering are bloody sacrifices because that's the life is in the blood and it is the means by which sin is atoned for.

Now, that grain offering is different, though. The grain offering didn't have any blood and it obviously represents something different than atonement. But what? Well, it turns out that although we don't find it in Leviticus, except in one place in Leviticus chapter 23, but many times when the grain offering was offered or any offering was offered, they also brought what they called a drink offering.

And a drink offering was wine. For example, in Numbers chapter 6, let's talk about the Nazirite finishing out his vow. In Numbers chapter 6, verse 17, it says, and he shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of peace offering to the Lord with the basket of unleavened bread.

So it was his grain offering apparently with his peace offering. The priest shall also offer its grain offering and its drink offering. Now, this drink offering is not mentioned very many times, but apparently the few times it is mentioned gives the impression that that may have been a regular thing.

When they presented the grain offering, they also presented wine. And yet the drink offering was wine. We know that because, for example, Numbers chapter 15, 5 makes that clear.

Numbers 15, 5 says, and one fourth of a hint of wine as a drink offering you shall prepare with a burnt offering and a sacrifice of each lamb. So you've got, with these different sacrifices, you offer grain and wine. And the grain offering, therefore, was eaten probably along with the drink offering, which is wine.

Remember I said that the grain offering was like a Eucharistic meal. It was a thanksgiving. Eucharist means thanksgiving.

And it was an offering made because you're thankful to God. The priest ate, you know, parts of the peace offering. The grain offering was offered at the same time.

And eating the grain, drinking the wine, probably was foreshadowing something of the same thing the Passover was foreshadowing, where they ate the bread and drank the wine there as a picture of the body and blood of Christ. When Jesus said, unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in you, he may have been referring to Passover or he may have been referring to just the regular custom of grain offerings and wine offerings. Now, the grain had to be, of course, fine flour, couldn't have any defects in it.

Finely ground flour offered with incense and oil. It had to be anointed with oil. Jesus' body was pure and he was anointed with the Holy Spirit when he was baptized.

And he was offered up as an offering of a sweet smell, like frankincense, to God. And so,

in addition to the blood sacrifices, there was the offering of a pure life, an anointed life. Probably Christ's life is the main thing that's considered there, rather than our own.

Although perhaps ours, too, because we're supposed to live the unleavened bread life. Paul said that over in 1 Corinthians 5, that our life is to be like a presentation. Well, it should be like unleavened bread.

In 1 Corinthians 5, it says, beginning at verse 6, Your glory is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore, purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you are truly unleavened. For indeed, Christ, our Passover, has sacrificed for us.

Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. And so we see that our lives are like unleavened also. And the grain offerings had to be always without leaven.

They also had to be without honey. No explanation is given of that. But we do know that honey in the Old Testament is like the quintessential pleasure food.

Whenever someone wanted to talk about the quintessential pleasure of the flesh, honey was a good example. David, in speaking about the law of the Lord, in Psalm 19, in verse 10, he said, Concerning the laws of the Lord, there is more to be desired than gold, and they are sweeter than honey. It's like the most pleasant tasting thing he could think of was honey, and the laws of God are sweeter than that.

In the Proverbs, it says, Have you found honey? Eat so much as is sufficient for you, lest you be filled therewith and vomited. The idea is if you find some pleasure in life, take it in moderation, or else you can get too much of a good thing. But honey is given as an emblem of something that's pleasurable.

In fact, it's also used that way when it says, A full soul loathes a honeycomb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet. That is, if you're hungry, you'll enjoy any food. If you're full, you won't even enjoy honey.

Honey is like the epitome of that which is physical, we might even say carnal, pleasure. Not that physical pleasure is always bad. God made honey, and honey is actually good stuff.

But it may be that the offering was offered without honey to suggest that the worship of God was to be without seeking some way to bring carnal pleasure to yourself. I don't know. The pleasure of worship should be pleasure and delight in God himself.

You know, it says in Psalms 16, verse 11, In your presence is fullness of joy, and at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. That is not carnal pleasures, godly pleasures. The pleasure of God himself should be what delights us in our worship.

Not honey, which may represent some kind of carnal, selfish, self-serving pleasure. But enjoying God himself. It says in Psalm 37, verse 4, Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Not delight yourself in physical things. And so, it's possible to worship God in a way that's pleasing or gratifying to oneself in ways that are carnal. And maybe that's what honey represents, I'm not sure.

I need to wind this down and finish it up. There's several other things I wanted to point out. For example, the kidneys.

Of most of those sacrifices, in fact, every sacrifice, the kidneys were offered on the altar along with the fat. And the kidney to the Jew is symbolic of what we would say our heart is. David talked about his reins, in the King James, his reins, from the same word as we get renal, pertains to the kidneys.

The reins, R-E-I-N-S in the King James. It's translated different things in modern translations. But the Hebrew word is the kidneys.

And he often talked about how he felt something in his reins and in his inward parts. To the Jew, the kidneys were this way they talked about having deep feeling. Like we say, I love you with all my heart.

Well, the heart is actually an organ of the body. We don't really love with our hearts. Our love is something from the soul.

Because the heart is just a blood pump. It's just a functioning organ in the body, just like the liver or the kidney. But we use the heart figuratively to speak of the inner emotions and so forth.

The Jews use the word kidneys for that. And therefore, in offering the kidneys, it might have to do with just offering God the inward parts. The emotions and the, what we'd say, our hearts.

Offering our hearts to God. There's also the washing of the inward parts, the entrails of the animal and of the legs. And David said in Psalm 150, he said, you desire truth in the inward parts.

God desires, you know, us to be clean and honest inside. And the washing of the entrails, the inward parts of the animal may represent that. That's Psalm 51.6. And there's New Testament references that make references to that, too.

About God's concern about our inward self. Paul said, though our outward man perishes, the inward man is being renewed day by day. And it's the contrast between the outer behavior and the inward motivations and character and so forth.

The entrails may represent the inner man. Whereas the legs, which are also washed in the burnt offering, represent the walk. The way someone walks.

The way they live, in other words. Well, I'm going to skip over some of the points I wanted to make. But I will make this one final point because Paul makes it.

Two final points that will be done here. One is that the carcass of the sin offering was taken outside the camp. The bull was taken outside the camp and burned to ashes.

As if it was unclean. It wasn't eaten. It wasn't disposed of on the altar.

Some parts were put on the altar, but the rest was taken outside and burned as if it wasn't a clean thing. And the writer of Hebrews indicates that that's indicative of Jesus and us being counted as unclean by the world. And he points out in Hebrews chapter 13 that Jesus was crucified outside the gate, outside the camp.

And a comparison is made to this practice in Leviticus in Hebrews 13. It says, Hebrews 13, 10. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin. That is, the corpses of the bulls that were offered as sin offerings. It says, are burned outside the camp.

Therefore, Jesus also that he might sanctify the people with his own blood suffered outside the gate. Therefore, let us go forth to him outside the camp bearing his reproach. The point here is that Jesus wasn't crucified in the temple in Jerusalem.

He was crucified outside the camp, outside the gate of the city. The writer of Hebrews sees a connection with that. Like the animal that bore the sins and whose corpse was treated as an unclean thing was burned outside the camp.

So Jesus was treated by the Jews as if he was unclean. They took him outside and disposed of him. And the writer of Hebrews says, and since that was true of him, it should be true of us.

We should go with him outside the camp bearing his reproach. If he's going to be treated that way, then we should be willing to be treated that way. If people are intrigued, Jesus has an unclean carcass, then we shouldn't expect to be treated better.

We should allow ourselves to accept such reproach on his behalf as well. And so that's another connection. The New Testament makes from this system of sacrifices and one other.

And that is one that's made by Paul in 1 Corinthians 9, 1 Corinthians 9, verses 13 through 14. Paul said, Do you not know that those who minister the holy things, meaning

the priests ministering at the altar offering sacrifices, they eat of the things of the temple? That means the portions of the sacrifices and the and the grain offerings never offered. They are given to the priest to eat.

That's how the priest eat. That's how the priest live off of those holy things that are offered. And those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar.

Even so, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. Now, this whole chapter. Paul is essentially talking about how Christians need to lay down their rights.

And in this section, he's talking about how he lays down his rights. That is, he does not require financial support for his ministry. He works with his hands.

He works a job and he ministers for free. But he points out that he and Barnabas were just about the only people who do that. Because he said the other ministers are supported.

Peter and the other apostles are supported. And he said that's really kind of a pattern that God set at the temple with the sacrificial system. The priests, they minister to the people and they eat what is given.

And by the way, what was given to the priest was given to God. The people who fed the priest did so by giving to God. The grain offering that people brought, they first threw some on the altar as an emblem that the whole thing is given to God.

But the priest eats it. Likewise, the sacrifices that the priest ate, parts of the sacrifices were first offered to God. The support of the priests was with that which was offered to God.

And the worshipper who was ministered to by the priest was the support of the priest, of his food. He received his food from the worshippers, but only in things they offered to God. Now Paul in Philippians chapter 4 said that he had received a gift from the Philippians.

And he said it's a sacrifice of a sweet savor, acceptable to God. So it's like he recognized that the gift that was sent to his support was really a gift to God. That is Philippians 4, 18, where he says, Indeed, I have all and abound.

I'm full having received from the papyrus of things which were sent from you. A sweet smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. When Paul was in prison, he couldn't support himself.

So people did send him support. When he was out of prison, he worked and he didn't take support. But he did say that just as the priests are supported from the things that

the worshippers bring to God, so God has ordained, he said, that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

Paul is an exception. He sees himself as an exception, but not all are. He points out that he has the right to be supported because he wants to point out that he's given up his rights in this matter.

But there is a right, he says. And so there is that principle Paul brings out from this. The priests at the altar, they're supported by their service at the altar.

So those who preach the gospel full time, he said, should receive their living from the gospel too. And so those are like a variety of different lessons the New Testament brings out that are based on this system of sacrifices that we just studied. This lecture might have seemed like a smattering of miscellaneous things unrelated to each other.

And to some extent they were because there's a lot of different directions that these different principles are taken by the New Testament writers. But these are some of the spiritual lessons that the Bible would bring out later. After the sacrificial system had been practiced for a while, the New Testament brings out these spiritual meanings and spiritual lessons from it for us.

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