

## Lesson 37 - OFFERINGS UNTO THE LORD - *Leviticus 1:1-4*

*(Lev. 1:1-4)* - *Exodus 35-40* records the building and dedication of the tabernacle. This is all a picture and type of the glorious Person and finished work of Christ and the salvation God freely gives to His chosen people, spiritual Israel, based on the blood of Christ (righteousness imputed). In *Leviticus*, we see the laws for all sacrifices and offerings unto the Lord, the priesthood, laws of dedication and purification, the day of atonement, laws governing relationships, penalties for particular sins, and the feast days. This was to keep them separate from other nations (*Lev. 20:26*). The most important offering for the nation was the Day of Atonement. Once a year, the high priest entered the holy of holies with the blood of sacrifice and sprinkled the blood over the mercy-seat (*Lev. 16:1-34*) for ceremonial atonement for the sins of the nation for one year. This was repeated yearly (*Heb. 9:7; 10:3*).

There were five offerings that God required of them. Four were blood offerings for atonement teaching that no sinner is accepted with God except on the basis of justice satisfied in the death of a substitute. They could only offer unblemished animals that God prescribed (*Lev. 22:17-25*). One offering was a meal or grain offering for thanksgiving, and to be without leaven (*Lev. 2:11*). Without blemish and without leaven pictured the sinlessness of Christ who bore our sins imputed to Him. God is reconciled to us and accepts our persons and our praise, worship, and service based on the merits of Christ's blood (*Heb. 1:3; 9:13-14; 1 Pet. 1:18-21; Rev. 1:5*). Meal offerings pictured the sacrifices of praise, worship, and service that God's people offer Him in gratitude for His grace in Christ. This pictured how that God's justice must first be satisfied by the death of Christ, and how God's people (their persons and their service) can only be accepted by Him through Christ (*Eph. 1:3-7; 1 Pet. 2:5*). The first three offerings were voluntary (*Lev. 1:3*), and, thus, sometimes called "free-will" offerings. This in no way gives credence to the modern heresy of "free-willism" which says that salvation is conditioned on man's "free-will." By nature, man has no will to believe God. But these voluntary offerings were typical of the new will that God gives His people in the new birth wherein they believe in Him and desire to praise, worship, and serve Him.

**I. THE BURNT OFFERING** (*Lev. 1*) - The burnt offering pictured the highest aspect of the work of Christ for God's chosen people where He is seen offering Himself up entirely to God to do His will even unto death to establish righteousness by which God justifies His people. It had to be without blemish in order to typify the sinless perfection and impeccability of Christ, the spotless Lamb of God. Christ did no sin, had no sin, and was never made sin in any way other than by the imputation of the sins of His people to His account (*2 Cor. 5:21a*). The whole offering was burnt upon the altar, and all went up to God as a sweet savour (*Eph. 5:2*), meaning that Christ's one sacrifice for sins glorified and satisfied God. Christ is the propitiation for the sins of His people, and His blood (His righteousness imputed) insures their complete salvation. For Israel under the Law, this was to be a continual testimony of the fact that we are all sinners who deserve nothing but condemnation and eternal death; that we can do nothing to make ourselves righteous and save ourselves from sin; that we need God's grace and mercy in Christ (the promised Messiah) for all salvation and all eternal blessings (*Eph. 1:3*).

**II. THE MEAL OFFERING** (*Lev. 2*) - These offerings were not for atonement as without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin (*Heb. 9:7,22*). The blood offerings pictured the ground of salvation and justification before God accomplished by the death of Christ. The meal offerings pictured Christ, the Bread of life and the fruit of salvation which is spiritual life given to spiritually dead sinners in the new birth by Christ. Christ's righteousness imputed is the ground of a sinner's justification before God, AND it is the source of spiritual

life from God. The meal offerings typified the praise, worship, and service of God's people, sinners saved, forgiven, and made righteous already in and through God's grace in Christ, all which evidence spiritual life within. God's people continually feed upon Christ and His Word, the Bread of life, as the Holy Spirit inspires and energizes them to praise, worship, and serve Him as they are motivated by love, grace, and gratitude. So, someone accepted by God, by His grace in Christ as pictured in the burnt offering, could respond in gratitude through a meal (or grain) offering (thank-offering). It usually was an offering of flour and oil with frankincense (a symbol of righteousness) in which a handful was burned, and the priests ate the rest. It was a gift to God from the best of the worshipper's grain in an act of thanksgiving for sins forgiven. An additional offering, the drink offering ("libation"), was poured on top of the grain offering as a symbol of joy (*Lev. 23:13; cf. Exod. 29:40-41*).

**III. THE PEACE OFFERING** (*Lev. 3*) - This offering pictured reconciliation accomplished that leads to sweet communion and fellowship between God and sinners in Christ. It required an unblemished animal from the worshipper's herd and/or various grains or breads. This was a sacrifice of thanksgiving and fellowship followed by a shared meal. The high priest was given the breast of the animal; the officiating priest was given the right foreleg. These pieces of the offering were called the "wave offering" and the "heave offering" because they were waved or lifted over the altar during the ceremony. The fat, kidneys, and lobe of the liver were burnt, meaning they were given to God, and the remainder of the animal was for the participants to eat, symbolizing God's provision. The vow offering, thanksgiving offering, and freewill offering mentioned in the Old Testament were all peace offerings.

**IV. THE SIN OFFERING** (*Lev. 4–5:13*) - This offering could also be called a "purification offering." It dealt with two issues: the necessity of forgiveness from unintentional sins and of cleansing from ceremonial uncleanness (*Lev. 4:2-3*). One purpose of the sin offering was to cleanse the tabernacle from human defilement, thus making possible the continuing fellowship and presence of God among His people. The special feature of this offering is in the whole bullock being burnt upon the ground outside the camp of Israel after the blood and fat were put upon the altar for God. This offering was for sin and pictures Christ who was made sin for us based on our sins imputed to Him (*2 Cor. 5:21*), and how He endured the judgment and wrath of God against sin in our stead as our Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer. The holiness of God and the awfulness of sin are pictured in the bullock being entirely burnt up outside the camp. It pictures Christ, forsaken of God, as our Sin-bearer as described in passages such as *Psalms 22*.

**V. THE TRESPASS OFFERING** (*Lev. 5:14–6:7*) - This offering was exclusively a ram sacrificed as an atonement for unintentional sins. It required reimbursement to an offended party, and also a cleansing from defiling sins or physical maladies. In the act of restitution for injuring someone by fraud, oppression, or deception, the value of the item in question was to be returned, and a "fifth part" (20%) of the value of the item was to be added. In this way, cursing was turned into blessing. Atonement was made by the blood of the offering, and the trespasser was forgiven. This offering presents Christ who died for our sins and trespasses on the cross restoring that which He took not away (*Ps. 69:4*). He has not only answered to God for our sins and paid our debt by His shed blood, but has added "the fifth part," as it were, bringing more glory to God and more blessings to man than were had before sin was committed. In Christ, not only do we find our trespasses taken away, but we also see the gift of righteousness imputed to us and from which we have spiritual and eternal life (*Rom. 5:21; 8:1-10*).