

**“Jesus Our Burnt Offering”****Leviticus 1****Craig Crawshaw**

The great preacher, Charles Spurgeon, tells the story of a young boy who prayed silently at the Sunday breakfast table. On their way to church, his mother asked him, “For what did you pray so earnestly at the breakfast table?” The boy replied, “I prayed that the preacher would say something today I could understand.” As I approach teaching from Leviticus, Chapter 1, I feel as though I want to answer that young boy’s prayer for all of you. Many find Genesis and Exodus intriguing and interesting with their many stories and adventures, but get bogged down in Leviticus with its offerings, feasts and regulations.

As we search for Jesus in Leviticus 1, I pray that I would say something today that you would both understand and could apply. And may you find Jesus, B.C., in the Leviticus law of the Burnt Offering.

**Leviticus 1:1-5, 9b** *Then the Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When any man of you brings an offering to the Lord, you shall bring your offering of animals from the herd or the flock. If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer it, a male without defect; he shall offer it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the Lord. He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf. He shall slay the young bull before the Lord; and Aaron’s sons the priests shall offer up the blood and sprinkle the blood around on the altar that is at the doorway of the tent of meeting... And the priest shall offer up in smoke all of it on the altar for a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the Lord.’”*

Ever since John the Baptist laid eyes on Jesus of Nazareth and exclaimed, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), Jesus has been identified with the sacrificial lambs, bulls and goats of the Jewish Scriptures. It should not surprise us, then, to find Jesus in the description of those sacrificial animals.

In **Genesis** we find **MAN RUINED**

In **Exodus** we find **MAN REDEEMED**

In **Leviticus** we find **MAN REUNITED** in relational fellowship with his Lord God

Leviticus 1-17 is the **GROUNDING** of fellowship through **SACRIFICE**

**Leviticus 17:11** *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.*

Leviticus 18-27 is the **WALK** of fellowship through **SEPARATION**

**Leviticus 20:26** *Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.*

In the opening five chapters of Leviticus we find the 5 offerings that God asked of the people. Each of them is a picture of a different aspect of the person and work of Jesus.

<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>The BURNT offering</b>	Jesus has completely consumed our sin
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>The GRAIN offering</b>	Jesus is our bread of life
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>The PEACE offering</b>	Jesus is our peace with God

## Chapter 4 The SIN offering

Jesus was made sin for us

## Chapter 5 The TRESPASS offering

Jesus has reconciled us to our neighbor

The BURNT OFFERING is the most important, and therefore is mentioned first. It is the offering that had been observed almost from the beginning of time, and up to the day of Moses.

Gen 3:21 Implied when God made garments of skin to clothe Adam and Eve

Gen 4:3-4 Implied when Abel brought the acceptable offering to the Lord of the first of his flock

Gen 8:20 First mention in Noah's offering after the flood

**Genesis 8:20** *Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.*

Gen 22 Seen in Abraham's offering up of his son Isaac

**Genesis 22:8** *Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."*

Multiple altars were built by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

## JESUS OUR BURNT OFFERING – Leviticus 1

I want to take you through the description of the burnt offering given in Leviticus 1, and help you discover Jesus in this important Jewish tradition. Note first that God is no longer calling from the scary heights of Mt. Sinai, but now that the tabernacle has been built as the travelling dwelling place of the Almighty, God speaks from inside the beautiful and amiable "tent of meeting" = the tabernacle. (v 1).

Note also that the call to God's people through Moses is a voluntary call to bring a burnt offering.

*1:2 "When any man of you brings an offering to the Lord..."*

We will see that the only acceptable offering to bring in order to begin or restore fellowship is Jesus Himself. The call goes out to all to exercise the free will He gives us. God wants fellowship and allegiance to Him to be voluntary – of our free will. But is not unlike the invitation of the president of the United States to attend a sit-down dinner - It can be refused, but it is not prudent that one should do so. Refuse not the sincere invitation of the Lord God to His fellowship. "Come, all you who are thirsty..." (Isaiah 55:1).

Now I want to share with you **10 keys** to the parallel between the burnt offering and Jesus.

**1. VALUE** In v. 2 we find that the burnt offering is to be from the herd (cattle) or the flock (sheep or goats). Now later in v. 14 we learn that in cases of poverty a turtledove or pigeon is also acceptable. The point here is that God wants a domesticated animal - one that is not wild, killing others for its food, but is attached to and valuable to its owner. In other words, God wants a sacrifice that costs dearly. When we offer a sacrifice of our best efforts, there is little if any value to the Lord of Lords; but when we offer Jesus we offer "the pearl of great price," and the One to whom God gives the greatest value.

**2. VIBRANT** v. 3 mandates a male animal to be offered. Yes, Jesus was a human male. But more, this speaks to the Hebrew mind of strength and vitality. When we offer Jesus to God as our sacrifice, we not only offer One of infinite value, but One of vibrant supernatural energy Who alone can reconcile God to man. Little did most Jews understand the symbolism of offering up a male animal valuable to its owner.

**3. PERFECT** v. 3 goes on to mandate an animal without defect, at least so far as was possible. No limps, gimps, bumps or bruises or imperfections were allowed when bringing a gift to a holy God. Anything we could bring in our own effort would be flawed in some way – but Jesus alone is the gift of perfection.

**1 Peter 2:22** [Jesus:] *Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth.* (Quoting Isaiah 53:9)

In this way, God wanted the sacrificial gift to be of special value and most difficult to give up. In the same way, God wants our gifts, both time, talent and treasure, to cost us something that shows our true love for God.

**4. DOORWAY** v. 3 finishes by stating that the burnt offering must be offered “at the doorway of the tent of meeting that he may be accepted before the Lord.” In context, this means that the burnt offering was to be brought to the bronze altar that was set up right before the entrance to the tabernacle tent. God wanted the sacrifice “front and center” for Him and all to see. God wanted the sacrifice of reconciliation to be a gift put on “His doorstep.” And note that this was that the one offering would be accepted. The “he” is not the sacrifice that would be accepted, but the giver of the sacrifice.

Do you see how beautifully this mirrors the New Testament truth that Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6) and that He is indeed the “door” to the heavenly kingdom (John 10:7; Revelation 3:20)? There is no gift other than Jesus that we can bring to allow relationship with God and access to heaven. We bring Jesus to God’s doorway because He is the doorway.

**5. TRANSFER** v. 4 gives the specific instruction for the giver to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering – that is of the sacrificial animal. This is the universal symbol for transfer – either of blessing to an heir, or of leadership to a commissioned pastor or missionary, or of God’s power to a sickly body. And in this case it is the symbolic transfer of personal sin to the sacrificial animal. This involves the releasing (confessing) of sin, acceptance of the transfer as complete, and identification with the sacrificed one as being very special.

This is exactly the picture of what we do as we offer Jesus sacrificed self as our “burnt offering” gift to God in our stead. We confess, accept and identify with Jesus as our Savior and Lord. It must be a conscious act and a willful act.

**6. ATONEMENT** v. 4 ends with “*to make atonement on his behalf.*” Atonement means “covering,” so the sacrifice of the animal “covered” their sin. But this covering was only temporary, for the sacrifice of bulls, goats and sheep could never remove sin (Hebrews 10:4). Jesus not only “covers” our sin but removes it completely, making us seen as “perfect” in the sight of God.

**Hebrews 10:14** *For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.*

There is an old chorus I remember singing in my youth, right around the time I was saved.

*Gone, gone, gone, gone, yes my sins are gone*

*Now my soul is free and in my heart’s a song.*

*Buried in the deepest sea, yes that’s good enough for me.*

*I shall live eternally, praise God, my sins are G O N E gone! (Helen Griggs, 1951)*

**7. DEATH** v. 5 then says “he shall slay” the animal and “sprinkle the blood around the altar that is at the doorway of the tent of meeting.” This is perhaps obvious. Yet, we must remember that it is not the sinless life of Jesus that saves, or the power of His earthly miracles, or the beauty of His righteousness. It is His death that saves. We must offer the sacrifice of the crucified Jesus, just as the Hebrews had to offer the slain animal. This is why the cross is the rallying point of our spiritual past, present and future.

As gory and even wicked as it sounds, we glory in the death of our Lord Jesus, for it is His death alone that saves us and that we can offer before God as our burnt offering to be that soothing aroma to God that He will accept to remove our sin.

And yes, there is yet more to see and discover.

**8. LAID BARE** As grotesque as it sounds to us in our sterile 21<sup>st</sup> century lives, God wanted the animal cut in pieces and arranged on the fire piece by piece, including the head. What symbolism can possibly be here for us to apply? Do you not see that the body of Jesus had to be bruised, beaten and punctured for all to see, and verified dead by the centurion in charge of His crucifixion? His death and burial had to be undeniably verified so that the resurrection would be the miracle of all miracles.

And for all time Jesus’ body and life has been scrutinized and gone over with spiritual microscope and forceps to examine Who He really was. And for all who will truly seek His identity, He has been found to be the pure, perfect, spotless teacher, healer, friend, Savior and Lord that he claimed to be. He has been “laid bare” just like the pieces of the sacrificed animal for all to see – and he has been found “spotless.”

**9. CONSUMED** In v. 9 we see that it is not called a “burnt offering” because it is crispy charred, but because it is completely consumed – literally, “gone up in smoke” - yes, “all of it.” There was nothing left of the original but ashes. And this is symbolic of the empty tomb – the grave clothes draped over nothing – the Jesus the disciples knew in the flesh gone completely. Yes, He resurrected – but came back a spiritual being able to go through walls and disappear at will and transport himself.

And spiritually speaking, we can say that “Jesus has given His all” for us. He laid it all out on the playing field. All of Him to restore all of us who will come to Him by faith.

It should remind us also of Hebrews 12:29: “*Our God is a consuming fire*” which in context tells us that He will ultimately leave no sin unpunished or sinner standing to oppose Him.

**10. SOOTHING** The end of v. 9 reminds us of what the ultimate purpose of the burnt offering is for.

It is for “*a soothing aroma to the Lord.*” It is to please the Father. And it is to appease the Father. This is the theological “propitiation” that Jesus’ death accomplished in satisfying the Father’s requirement for fellowship with man. God was temporarily satisfied with the burnt offerings of the Israelites, as they looked forward to the day when the Messiah would come to offer the perfect and final sacrifice.

And our offering of Jesus crucified as our only acceptable offering “soothes” our Heavenly Father” and allows us to have that intimate, Spirit-filled communion with Him that believers enjoy.

I hope the prayer of that young child has been answered for you today – you know, that one he prayed that the preacher would say something that he could both understand and apply. I hope you have understood at least something of the 10 KEYS that link the burnt offering with Jesus’ death.

1. VALUE
2. VIBRANT
3. PERFECT
4. DOORWAY
5. TRANSFER

6. ATONEMENT
7. SOOTHING
8. DEATH
9. LAID BARE
10. CONSUMED

And I hope you can and will apply this teaching to your life.

Do you need to begin a relationship with Jesus? Bring to Him the crucified Savior as your only hope for relationship. Confess you sin, accept His new life, and commit to live for Him completely.

Do you need to rid yourself of a nagging problem? Commit that problem to God as you place your hand symbolically on the crucified head of Jesus, transferring that problem into His perfect care and resolution.

Do you need a new start in life – a second chance? Come to the Father through the sacrifice of Jesus and receive the same power that rose Jesus from the grave. By faith, believe that your old life and self is “covered” and has died with Christ, and believe that your new life is now consumed by Jesus. Commit to live for Him and Him alone.

The altar of the “burnt offering” is a place to return to time and time again, that we might find help in time of trouble and bring a soothing aroma of praise to the Lord God.

I trust that once again, you discovered “Jesus, B.C.”