

Goals

Although there are only two lessons based on the book of Leviticus, they are extremely important because they focus on being holy. By examining in detail the sacrificial offerings and the annual feasts celebrated by the Israelites, the students catch a glimpse of the spiritual meaning behind each of those regulations. All the laws served the purpose of helping God's people remain a holy nation, that their way of living would be different than others around them. Our students are living in a world that is much like that of the Israelites' time, tainted and impure. What society says is permissible to do is usually a sin in the eyes of God. To remain pure is a difficult task. Hopefully, these lessons will encourage and empower the students to stand firm in their faith.

unit
3**Teacher Devotional**

Have you ever thought about the value of a gem? What makes it valuable? A diamond is certainly pretty to look at. The rarity and subsequent demand for it determines how expensive it can become. But if we really think about it, a diamond is nothing more than a piece of rock. The world places a lot of value on wealth, prestige and fame, but just like the diamond, how valuable are these things, really? In God's kingdom, these worldly things are worthless because Jesus Christ has taught us that service, love and sacrifice are what matters. Let's remember what is truly important and store our treasure in the heavenly kingdom.

Treasures in Heaven

*"...lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal."
(Mt 6:20)*

Lesson 8

Sacrificial Offerings
in Leviticus**Listed Scriptures**

Ex 39:1-30; Lev 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Lesson Aim

To understand the various sacrificial offerings found in the Old Testament and how they apply to our spiritual lives today

Memory Verse

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God." (Rom 12:1b)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Exodus 30-40

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



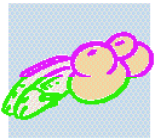
Leviticus details the laws and regulations concerning services in the tabernacle. Many people skip over this book because they find the decrees too numerous and irrelevant to their lives today. However, hidden within these seemingly dry and mundane regulations are many deep spiritual truths. When we understand the significance of each sacrifice or priestly function, it can help us draw closer to God. In Greek, the word Leviticus means "relating to the Levites," since much of the book deals with the special duties of the Levites (the sons of Aaron). The central theme is holiness (the word holiness appears 87 times in the scroll). It can be divided into two main sections. Chapters 1-10 talk about how to draw near to God through purity of worship. Chapters 11-27 discuss how to achieve a holy faith through a godly life. This lesson will focus on the first section.



How often do you say “I’m sorry” in a given day? Do you say it for just about anything? Do you mean it or do you say it out of habit? God takes repentance and forgiveness very seriously. Let’s examine what is involved in asking for forgiveness in the Old Testament and how it applies to our lives today.

B I B L E S T U D Y

Part 1
Sacrificial Offerings



Ever since man fell from grace, he no longer enjoyed the right to commune with God since sin separates us from God. To restore the intimate relationship between God and man requires the remission of sin through sacrifice. This is because under God’s law of righteousness, the only way for sins to be cleansed and forgiven is through death and the shedding of blood (Heb 9:22). Before the time of Jesus Christ, various sacrifices were needed in order to restore the relationship between the Israelites and God. In addition, it was the priests’ duty to perform these sacrifices on behalf of the people. In essence, they were the mediators between God and man. Today, we do not need to observe these laws because Jesus Christ sacrificed His life for us (Heb 9:12-14, 23). We can also commune with God freely without mediators because Jesus Christ is our everlasting high priest (Heb 7:21-25). So what relevance do these sacrifices have to our lives? By understanding the spiritual significance behind them, it can remind us that we are a holy people and that we should act accordingly. In the Old Testament, there were five types of sacrifices: burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering, sin offering and guilt offering.



A . Burnt Offering (Lev 1, 6:8-13)

This sacrifice was performed for the atonement of sins in general. A bull, ram or male bird could be offered but it must be without defect. The sacrifice was placed

placed on the altar at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and was slaughtered before the Lord. The person offering this sacrifice would place his hand on the head of the animal while the priest killed it to show that his sins had been symbolically transferred to the animal. The priests then sprinkled the blood against the altar on all sides. Afterwards, the animal was skinned and cut into pieces. Its inner parts and legs were washed with water. Then everything was burned on the altar except the skin, which was the priests’ portion (Lev 1:9, 7:8). This offering has the following spiritual significance to our faith today:

- a. To use an animal without defect points to our Lord Jesus as faultless and without sin. We should also pursue perfection so that we may find favor with God (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 1:19; Mt 5:48; Phil 2:15).
- b. The sprinkling of blood around the altar represents Jesus Christ’s shedding of blood on the cross to save us. We should learn from His willingness to sacrifice (1 Jn 2:2, 3:16; Ps 107:1-3; Rom 9:2-3).
- c. The skinning of the burnt offering reminds us that the Lord Jesus did not seek His own glory and did not place emphasis on His outward appearance. Similarly, we should not place emphasis on outer appearance or the vanity of the world (Jn 7:24; Jas 2:1-7).
- d. Cutting the sacrifice into pieces means that we need to deny ourselves and take away our self-centeredness (Mt 6:1-5, 26:39; 1 Sam 15:24, 25, 30).
- e. The washing of the inner parts and the limbs refers to the cleansing of our hearts, exercising self-control and walking in the holy path (Jer 17:9; Mk 7:20-23; Prov 4:26-27).
- f. Complete burning of the offering is equivalent to our complete sacrifice, without holding anything back (Rom 14:7-8).



B . Grain Offering (Lev 2, 6:14-18, 7:12-13)

This offering was made of fine flour from wheat, although cakes or roasted grain could also be given (Lev 2:1-2, 4, 14). It was offered together with the burnt offering, with oil, salt and incense added on top. Only a handful of this grain was burned on the altar. The rest belonged to the priests (Lev 2:3). This offering symbolizes the perfect virtue of Jesus Christ, who willingly died for us and now acts as our spiritual bread.

- a. The pouring of the oil is in reference to the Holy Spirit. Believers also need the downpouring of the Holy Spirit to become sanctified (Lk 4:18; Heb 9:14; Rom 15:16; 2 Thess 2:13).
- b. Adding incense to the offering represents the fragrant aroma of our Lord Jesus. Similarly, believers should also give off a sweet spiritual scent.
- c. The mixing of the salt reminds us that we need to demonstrate the

characteristics of salt, which can preserve and season (Mk 9:50; Mt 5:13, 11:29).

- d. The absence of yeast signifies that Jesus Christ was sinless and without blame. We also need to rid ourselves of any malice, hypocrisy and sin (1 Cor 5:6-8; Eph 4:31).

C. Peace Offering (Lev 3, 7:21, 28-34)

There were three types of peace offerings: to show gratitude to God, to fulfill a vow that was made or as a freewill offering. It also accompanied the burnt offering (Lev 3:5). Any animal without defect from the herd could be used (Lev 3:1, 6, 12). Similar to the burnt offering, the animal was slaughtered and its blood sprinkled against the sides of the altar. But afterwards, all the fat, the kidneys and the appendage to the liver were removed and only these were burned. The breast and right thigh of the animal were given to the priests as a contribution. If it was a thanksgiving offering, the family ate the remainder of the sacrifice in the outer court on the same day. If it was to fulfill a vow or a freewill offering, then it could be eaten the first and second days (Lev 3:9-11, 7:13-34). This offering reminds us that we should constantly remember the grace of God and give thanks to Him (2 Cor 6:1; Ps 116:12-13; Gen 28:20-22; Ecc 5:4-6).

- a. Burning the fatty portions of the sacrifice is symbolic of repaying the grace of God with the best of the sacrifice. We should also offer our best to God as we humbly serve Him (1 Pet 5:5-6; Lk 17:9-10).
- b. This was the only offering where the person presenting it could eat the sacrifice. This tells us such offerings please God and by partaking of it, it can bring about peace, joy and blessings to the family (Heb 13:15-16; 2 Cor 9:7-8).

D. Sin Offering (Lev 4:1-5:13, 6:24-30)

This was done for the atonement of unintentional sins. The sinful parties presented offerings based on their status and wealth. A young bull without defect was used if the priest or the entire congregation had sinned. For a ruler, a male goat without defect was used. When a commoner sinned, he had to offer a female goat or lamb. In cases of extreme poverty, birds or fine flour could be substituted. The animals used were slaughtered in the same manner as the burnt offering. However, afterwards, the priest would dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle seven times in front of the curtain, before the Lord (sins of the priest or entire congregation). Then

he would smear some of the blood on the horns of the altar and would pour the rest of it at the base of the altar. Only the fatty portions (like the peace offering) of the sacrifice were burned on the altar. The remainder of the bull was then burned outside the camp if the sin offering was for the priests or congregation (Lev 4:11, 20). If it was for the rulers and commoners, then the remainder of the sacrifice was eaten in the court by the priests who offered it on their behalf (Lev 6:26). Some spiritual implications of this offering:

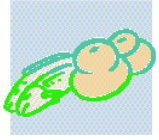
- a. For this offering, the higher a person's status, the higher the value of the animal used for the sacrifice. It implies that people with greater responsibility are held more accountable than others (Lk 12:47-48). We should always remember our role and importance as members of the church.
- b. Sprinkling and smearing of blood implies that it is by the Lord Jesus' blood that we are able to come before Him and confess our sins. By the blood of Jesus Christ, we can humbly pray and confess our sins to God and ask Him for forgiveness (Heb 10:20; Rev 8:3-4; Heb 4:15-16; Ps 51:17).
- c. The burning of the fatty portions refers to the dedication of our talents and abilities to God. The burning of the rest of the animal outside the camp represents the complete removal of our sinful nature (i.e. pride, self-righteousness, passion, lust, Rom 8:6; Jas 1:21; Deut 23:9-14).

Teaching Tips

It may be helpful to teach this part of the lesson by creating five groups of students so that they can each study one of the offerings. Then after each group has been given the chance to read the references, they can summarize for the rest of the class the purpose of the offering and how the sacrifice was carried out. You can use the notes above to ensure they have covered the important details and also talk about the spiritual significance after each group has presented. If there are not enough students, consider creating a large table to fill in the information as you go along to make it easier to differentiate among the five offerings. A table is provided in the students' worksheets with the appropriate headings.

E. Guilt Offering (Lev 5:14-6:7, 7:1-7)

The guilt offering was for the atonement of unintentional sins that required restitution (i.e. touching unclean things, lying, swearing falsely, stealing). A bull without defect was used and the method of carrying out this offering was identical to that of the sin offering. As well, the person injured by the sin had to be compensated plus another one-fifth of the value as determined by the priest. If the sin were against God, then the one-fifth would be given to the priest.



Part 2 Priestly Duties

The priestly regulations were extremely detailed. Here we will examine several aspects and the spiritual significance they have to our lives.

A . Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the priests included the care of the tabernacle and everything within it. They also instructed, taught, judged and blessed God's people (Num 18:4-7; Mal 2:6-7; Num 6:23-27, 16:46-48). Before taking on any sacred duties, the priests first had to set themselves apart to be holy. They had to wash themselves with water to cleanse away all sins (Lev 8:6, 16:24). Then after putting on holy garments, they were anointed with oil for consecration (Lev 8:7-12). Only then would they be ready to present the offerings to God, whether for themselves or on behalf of the Israelites. Today, all people called by God are considered priests. We should also take special care of our duties as God's followers and set ourselves apart as holy and pleasing to our Lord Jesus.

B . Special Garments (Ex 39:1-20; Lev 8:7-9)

The clothing that the priests wore was special and each piece held important meaning.

- a. The tunic was an undergarment made of finely twisted linen. It is symbolic of Jesus Christ's inner holy purity.
- b. The outer garment consisted entirely of blue cloth. Pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet yarn were added to the hem of the robe. Bells made of pure gold were also fastened around the hem. These signify that the wearer is spiritual, belongs to heaven and bears much good fruit.
- c. The ephod was the centerpiece of the clothing. It was worn over the outer robe, like a vest. It was woven out of gold, blue, purple and scarlet thread and fine linen thread. Two shoulder straps mounted with onyx stones engraved with the names of the sons (the tribes) of Israel held the ephod together. A breastpiece was fitted to the ephod. On it, 12 gemstones were mounted, each engraved with the name of one of the 12 tribes of Israel. The ephod is symbolic of how valuable we are in the eyes of God.

- d. The sash or waistband was woven out of blue, purple and scarlet thread and fine linen thread. By tying it around the waist, it symbolizes of servitude and humility. As God's followers, we should always remember that Jesus Christ came into the world to serve others and that we need to imitate Him.
- e. The turban was the headdress. It was affixed with a gold plate with the inscription "Holiness to the Lord." This reminds us to set ourselves apart to be holy.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

What were the five major sacrificial offerings? List one spiritual application to our lives from each.

2

What was the importance of using unblemished animals as sacrifices?

3

How do you think these specific rules and regulations about the sacrifices affected the people's state of mind when preparing for them? Do you think they made them take everything more seriously or would they have just thought they were cumbersome?

4

Describe the special garments the priests wore and their spiritual significance to our lives.

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Restoring Our Relationship With God

Despite all the stiff regulations concerning the offerings, we can see that behind all of it is a God who is forgiving and merciful. He gives us opportunities to repent and when we do, He is ready and willing to accept what we have to offer. Unfortunately, we don't always grab hold of those opportunities. Sometimes, we may think that we are right and don't even ask for forgiveness. Other times, we think we have sinned beyond help and don't bother to pray to God. But God has shown us that we can approach Him and ask Him to help us, no matter what the circumstance. Reflect on the following questions:

1. Today we do not need to bring any animal offerings to God when we ask for forgiveness of our sins. However, we do need to show God our sincerity. How should we approach God when we want to ask for forgiveness?
2. Read Matthew 18:21-35. Jesus Christ clearly talks about true forgiveness. What do you think it involves?
3. Is it difficult for you to forgive others who have wronged you? Think about how Jesus Christ is forgiving and merciful towards you. Does that change the way you feel about forgiving others?
4. Is there someone you need to forgive or ask for forgiveness from?
5. Read the following testimony.

My dad and I had a really tough time getting along as I grew up. I felt like he was constantly putting me down in front of my brothers and sisters. I felt like I had no self-esteem. He would say things that made me feel so useless. I grew up hating him. Though I somehow knew all of this hatred wasn't right, I didn't have any idea as to how to get rid of it. After I gave my life to the Lord when I was sixteen, He began to deal with me concerning my anger towards my dad. God told me through the prayers that I need to take a step and truly forgive my dad. I didn't understand why I would cry so much in my prayers. I do love him in some ways but now I know that God really wanted me to forgive.

–Chris

The Bible says in Ephesians 4:26-27, “In your anger do not sin’: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry. And do not give the devil a foothold.” God says, “Do not even let ONE DAY go by while you are still mad. If you do, you give the devil a foothold in your life.”

Ephesians 4:31-32 tells us how to deal with anger: “Get rid of every form of bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” How can it be really done, to truly forgive?

a. Memorize scriptures

Study scriptures like:

“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” (Mt 6:14)

“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” (Mk 11:25)

Write each forgiveness scripture down on an index card and take the cards with you everywhere. Meditate on them until you are saying them in your head.

b. Take a step to truly forgive

You must forgive even if the person who hurt you never admits he did anything wrong. Once you make the decision to forgive, you will feel that God can help you to win this battle.

Even after you've taken this step, you will have a natural tendency to get angry again. Pull out the scripture cards and start memorizing them again. Remember, God alone has the awesome power to heal a broken heart. *“If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command; Whoever loves God must also love his brother.” (1 John 4:20–21)*

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



In the Old Testament, offering sacrifices was the way to restore the relationship between man and God. The rituals reminded the people that they needed to return to God and ask for forgiveness. Today, we must go through Jesus Christ to be reconciled with God because He became the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Does today's lesson remind you to restore your relationship with God? How can you ask Jesus Christ to help you?