

# CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE- PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian  
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## DHW BIBLE CLASS LESSON 1 LEVITICUS CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Leviticus is a sequel to Exodus. Exodus is about God's deliverance of the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt. God said (Exodus 3:7, 8), "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and bring them up out of the land unto a good land flowing with milk and honey . . ."

In Exodus, God came down to man. In Leviticus, God prescribed the way the children of Israel might come to Him. Exodus ends with the building and completion of the Tabernacle wherein God dwelt in the midst of the children of Israel. Leviticus opens with the LORD speaking to Moses (Leviticus 1:1, 2), "And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD...."

How we approach God is very important; Man can come to God only by the way that God has prescribed in His Word, not by man's own desired ways.

### OVERVIEW

Leviticus is the most legalistic book of the Bible. This characteristic of the book should not discourage Christians from reading and studying it. It is mentioned no less than 56 times that God spoke to Moses. And through Moses, God gave the children of Israel laws that taught them how they could *worship* God and how they should *walk* before God.

Although many of the ceremonial and communal laws were peculiar to Israel, the theology and the principles that can be drawn from them are no less pertinent and relevant to us. Our Lord Jesus Christ in His ministry quoted from Leviticus. Paul, Peter and the other writers of the New Testament also quoted from it. Christians today need to understand how they can approach God, how they should worship Him, and what they should do in their daily life to glorify Him. "And ye shall be holy, as I am holy," says the LORD, is **the key theme** of the book (11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7, 26).

Under this main theme are five movements: (1) Fellowship with God represented by the sacrifices [chapters 1-7]; (2) Service for God exemplified by the priests [chapters 8-10]; (3) Holiness before God [chapters 11-15]; (4) Forgiveness by God [chapter 16]; and (5) Obedience to God [chapters 17-27].<sup>1</sup>

Our diligent study of the book will benefit us in terms of learning the way we ought to worship God and how we should walk before Him. This is the

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<sup>1</sup> Derek Tidball, *Discovering Leviticus* (England, Crossway Books, 1996, 18).

heart's desire of every Christian who loves God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### OUTLINE

- A. The LORD prescribed the way that the children of Israel might bring an offering to Him (1:1-2).
  1. The LORD called Moses and spoke to him from the new tabernacle (v.1).
  2. The LORD laid down the way in which the children of Israel could bring an offering to Him (v.2a).
  3. The children of Israel must bring from the cattle or the sheep (v.2b).
- B. If the offering was a burnt sacrifice of the herd (1:3-17).
  1. It must be a bullock (v.3)
    - a. a male
    - b. zero defect (v.3a).
  2. The offerer must do it voluntarily (v.3b).
    - a. present it at the door of the tabernacle before the LORD (v.3c).
    - b. put his hand on the head of the bullock (v.4a).
    - c. it will be accepted to make an atonement for himself (v.4b).
    - d. he himself kill the bullock, skin it, and cut it into pieces (vv.5, 6).
    - e. he wash the inward parts and legs in water (v.9a).
  3. The priests, Aaron's sons, would take the blood
    - a. sprinkle the blood round the brazen altar (v.5b).
- b. make the fire on the altar,
  - c. place pieces in order on the altar, and
  - d. burn all the parts on the altar (vv.7-9).
4. The burnt offering of the herd was accepted as a sweet aroma pleasing to the LORD (v.9c).
- C. If the offering was a burnt sacrifice of the flock (1:10-13).
  1. It must be a sheep or a goat (v.10)
    - a. a male
    - b. zero defect
  2. The offerer himself must kill the sheep or the goat on the northward side of the altar (v.11).
    - a. cut the sheep or the goat into pieces (v.12)
    - b. wash the inward parts and the legs with water (v.13).
  3. The priests, Aaron's sons, would sprinkle the blood round about the brazen altar (v.11b).
    - a. lay the pieces of the sheep or goat, with its head and fat in order on the altar (v.12).
    - b. burn all the pieces on the altar.
  4. The burnt offering of the flock was accepted as a sweet aroma pleasing to the LORD (v.13c).
- D. If the offering was a burnt sacrifice of the fowls (1:14-17).
  1. It must be a turtledove or a young pigeon (v.14).
  2. The offerer shall pluck away the feathers (v.16).

- a. cast the feathers on the east side of the altar where the ashes were.
  - b. split the bird into two with the wings still on it but not completely.
3. The priests would receive the offering (v.15).
    - a. bring it to the altar.
    - b. wring off the head.
    - c. burn the head on the altar.
    - d. drain the blood at the side of the altar.
    - e. burn the bird on the altar after it had been prepared by the offerer.
  4. The burnt offering of the turtledove or pigeon was accepted as a sweet aroma pleasing to the LORD (v.17).

## COMMENTARY

### Fellowship with God

Once again God took the initiative—and *the LORD called unto Moses* (v.1). This opening phrase “and the LORD called” is in fact the title of the book in the Hebrew Scriptures—*wayyiqra*.<sup>2</sup> The Jews named the books of the Old Testament using the opening words.<sup>3</sup>

The LORD called Moses out of the tabernacle. This was the tabernacle,

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<sup>2</sup> The name Leviticus in the English Bible is derived from the Latin Vulgate, which in turn drew it from the Septuagint (LXX), *leuitikon*, the Greek translation of the Old Testament in Hebrew.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis is called “In the beginning”—the first word *berashith*; Exodus, “And the names of”—the first words *wayeleh shemut*.

which was built according to God’s blueprint. It was now completed. God’s glory descended upon it and He dwelt in the midst of His people. He spoke to the children of Israel through Moses. Moses became a mediator between God and the people. The fact that God exhorted the children of Israel to bring a gift to Him indicated that He invited His people to come to Him and have fellowship with Him. However, their approach to Him must be as prescribed by Him. They could not come before Him in their own way.

### The Way Prescribed: the Burnt Offering

The people were required to bring a burnt offering to God when they desired to bring a gift. The burnt offering was the highest kind of offering to God. Noah was the first to make such an offering (Genesis 8:20). Abraham was told to offer his only son, Isaac, to God. He took him to a place where he put him on the altar to kill and burn him (Genesis 22). The burnt offering was the most basic form of offering to the LORD.

The LORD listed three things that the people could offer Him. The gifts were graded according to the resources of the giver—from the herd, from the flock or from the fowls. Nobody would be deprived of coming to fellowship with the LORD because of his or her lack of resources. In other words, nobody would be too poor to make an acceptable offering to the LORD. This writer believes that God will bless His people with the means to bring a gift to Him for He delights in the praises of His people (Isaiah 61:11).

### The Offering of the Bullock

The first type of burnt sacrifice was the “bullock” from the herd (v.5). In Hebrew, the word is literally “son”, that

is, a son from the herd or cattle. The word suggested a young and strong bullock. It must be a male and it must be without any defect or deformity. God requires all offerings brought to Him to be the best. God deserves the very best from His people who profess to love and honour Him.

Moreover, it must be voluntary. The LORD had said in the beginning, "If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD" – this means a voluntary, freewill offering. There was no compulsion. No one was forced to do so.

The worshipper must bring the bullock to the only entrance to the tabernacle. He could not offer it at the door of his own tent. He must bring the gift to the tabernacle. Before slaughtering the bullock, he must lay his hand on the head of the animal. Some commentators explain that the act indicated the transference of the person's sins onto the animal. Others explain that the laying of hand on the animal signified the person's identification with the bullock, serving as his substitute. Both ideas do not contradict each other. The offering was accepted "to make an atonement" for the offerer (v.4), that is, to atone or cover the sin of the offerer.

The worshipper must slaughter the bullock himself at the door of the tabernacle. Then the priests, Aaron and his sons, would take the blood and sprinkle it round about the brazen altar. He could not do this himself. The priests had to do it on his behalf. After that he had to skin the bullock, and cut it into pieces. In the meantime, the priests would prepare the fireplace, set the fire and lay the wood "in order" on the fire. The phrase "in order" was mentioned again when the priests laid the parts of

the bullock on the altar (vv.8, 12). It was forbidden to just lay the wood and the pieces of the animal haphazardly. It must be properly and orderly done. In coming to worship God, the principle is that we must come before God in a manner that is proper and decent. Our attitude and actions will indicate the degree to which we honour and respect the Lord our God. In addition, the worshipper must wash the "inwards", that is, the entrails or intestines and the legs. This was to ensure that no dung or dirt was offered. Finally, "all" had to be offered. God requires that a worshipper gives his all to Him. God deserves our all. The command is to love God with *all* our heart, with *all* our mind, with *all* our strength, and with *all* our soul. Our Lord Jesus Christ states that whosoever loves anyone, even his father or his mother, more than Him is not worthy to be His disciple (Matthew 10:37).

#### **The Offering of the Sheep or Goat**

If the worshipper desired to worship the LORD but did not have the resources to offer a young bullock, he could offer a sheep or a goat. It must be a male and without blemish; the same as the bullock. He himself must kill the animal on the north side of the altar where there was probably more space. In other words, he has to enter into the courtyard of the tabernacle. He had the same responsibilities and duties of cutting the animal and washing its entrails and legs. The priests, Aaron and his sons, would sprinkle the blood round about the altar. Again the pieces had to be laid "in order."

#### **The Offering of Turtledove or Pigeon**

If the worshipper could not afford a young bullock, sheep or goat, he could bring an offering of a turtledove (a species of doves) or a pigeon. It must be young birds. The priests would

receive the bird from the worshipper, take it to the altar, wring its head off, and burn it on the altar. The blood had to be drained out at the side of the altar (v.15). The worshipper must pluck off the feathers and dispose of them beside the altar on the eastern side where the place of ashes was. The worshipper would then divide the bird into two but not completely --probably cut along the upper part of the body and spread it open. The wings were not dismembered. Then the priests would take the bird and burn it on the altar.

### **A Sweet Aroma Offering**

This was the burnt sacrifice unto the LORD, an offering accepted by the LORD as a sweet aroma, pleasing and approved by Him.

### **PRACTICAL VALUE**

The worship of the LORD was central to the children of Israel. The tabernacle was erected in the centre of the camp depicting the centrality of God's presence in their midst and the central focus of their individual and corporate lives. The theology is clear. God must sit on the throne of our life, individually as a Christian and corporately as the body of Christ.

When the children of God come to worship Him, they should not come empty-handed. They ought to bring an offering that is appropriate according to their means and ability. Nothing is too small when offered in the spirit as prescribed by Him. The Lord our God would ensure that we have the means of making an offering to him. More importantly, God wants us to sacrifice our bodies—our lives—as a living sacrifice to Him.

Some Christians take everything for granted. They do not offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise to Him (Hebrews 13:15).

How can we have victory over our enemies, troubles and tribulations? It is only through God's grace. Let us praise the Lord for the victory which He had achieved on our behalf over sin, Satan and the world. We are more than conquerors through Him. Praise the Lord, Hallelujah!

Should we not come to worship the Lord our God every Lord's Day looking our best inwardly as well as outwardly? Do not excuse your sloppy appearance by saying that God looks at the inside and not the outside -- the quotation is meant to be used when a person's outward appearance is deceiving and we want to make the point that God can read our inner intentions. If we are right with God in our hearts, we should express it in our speech, actions and appearance before God.

Let us worship God in the way that He has prescribed to us, in Spirit and in Truth.

**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Daily Readings**

**Monday:** Leviticus 1:1-2; John 4:23-24; John 1:29.

**Tuesday:** Leviticus 1:3-9; Ephesians 5:1-2.

**Wednesday:** Leviticus 1:10-13; Romans 12:1-2.

**Thursday:** Leviticus 1:14-17; Psalm 9:18; Psalm 72:12-14.

**Friday:** Leviticus 1:1-17; Hebrews 9:19-28.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What evidence is there that Moses was a mediator between God and the children of Israel?

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2. What kind of offering was the LORD referring to—corporate or personal?

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3. In what spirit must the burnt sacrifice be offered?

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4. What is the significance of laying the hands on the burnt offering?

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5. How were the pieces of the burnt offering to be placed on the altar? What is the principle of worship that is being taught?

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6. Why did the LORD require an animal that is male and without blemish from the herd / flock?

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7. Which parts of the sheep or goat had to be burned on the altar?

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8. What do the three choices of burnt offerings reveal about the LORD?

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9. What is meant by the phrase “a sweet savour unto the LORD”?

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10. What impresses you most in this chapter?

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