

Leviticus Chapter 1

Laws for Burnt Offerings

Lev 1:1 The LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting. He said,

Lev 1:2 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When anyone among you brings an offering to the LORD, bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock.

Lev 1:3 "'If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, you are to offer a male without defect. You must present it at the entrance to the tent of meeting so that it will be acceptable to the LORD.

Lev 1:4 You are to lay your hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on your behalf to make atonement for you.

Lev 1:5 You are to slaughter the young bull before the LORD, and then Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the blood and splash it against the sides of the altar at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

Lev 1:6 You are to skin the burnt offering and cut it into pieces.

Lev 1:7 The sons of Aaron the priest are to put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire.

Lev 1:8 Then Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, including the head and the fat, on the wood that is burning on the altar.

Lev 1:9 You are to wash the internal organs and the legs with water, and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Lev 1:10 "'If the offering is a burnt offering from the flock, from either the sheep or the goats, you are to offer a male without defect.

Lev 1:11 You are to slaughter it at the north side of the altar before the LORD, and Aaron's sons the priests shall splash its blood against the sides of the altar.

Lev 1:12 You are to cut it into pieces, and the priest shall arrange them, including the head and the fat, on the wood that is burning on the altar.

Lev 1:13 You are to wash the internal organs and the legs with water, and the priest is to bring all of them and burn them on the altar. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Lev 1:14 "'If the offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, you are to offer a dove or a young pigeon.

Lev 1:15 The priest shall bring it to the altar, wring off the head and burn it on the altar; its blood shall be drained out on the side of the altar.

Lev 1:16 He is to remove the crop and the feathers and throw them down east of the altar where the ashes are.

Lev 1:17 He shall tear it open by the wings, not dividing it completely, and then the priest shall burn it on the wood that is burning on the altar. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Leviticus 1 outlines the rules for the "burnt offering" (*olah*), where an animal is completely consumed on the altar. This chapter establishes key spiritual principles—**substitution**, **costly sacrifice**, and **atonement**—that are fulfilled in the New Testament.

- **The Ultimate Substitute:** In the Old Testament, the worshiper placed their hand on the animal's head, symbolizing the transfer of sin and guilt to a substitute. This points directly to the New Testament where Jesus becomes the perfect, unblemished sacrifice to take away the sins of the world. **A Pure and Spotless Sacrifice:** The animal in Leviticus 1 had to be a male "without defect". The New Testament applies this imagery directly to Christ, who lived a sinless life and is described as a lamb "without blemish or defect" (1 Peter 1:19).

1Peter 1:18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors,

1Peter 1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

1Peter 1:20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

1Peter 1:21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

- **Total Consecration:** Unlike other offerings where parts of the animal were eaten by the priests, the burnt offering was entirely consumed by the fire. This represents absolute, total surrender to God. The New Testament mirrors this in Romans 12:1, which calls believers to present their own bodies as "living sacrifices".

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God--this is your true and proper worship.

Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

In Leviticus 1, the priest was commanded to wash the internal organs and legs of the burnt offering with water before placing them on the altar. The New Testament interprets this ritual cleaning as a visual prophetic picture of inner moral purity and spiritual cleansing through Jesus Christ.

The specific New Testament connections and fulfillments include:

1. Inward Purity vs. Outward Show

The internal organs represent a person's hidden thoughts, motives, and emotions. While the outside of the animal looked clean, the inside had to be washed before it could be offered to God.

- **The Contrast:** Jesus heavily rebuked the religious leaders in **Matthew 23:25–26** for only cleaning the outside of the cup while leaving the inside full of greed and self-indulgence.

Matthew 23:25 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

Matthew 23:26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

- **The Fulfillment:** God desires truth and cleanliness in the "inmost parts." True devotion under the New Covenant requires an internal transformation of the heart, not just an outward ritual.

Psalms 51:5 (NKVJ) Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

Psalms 51:6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden *part* You will make me to know wisdom.

Psalms 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

2. The Cleansing Power of the Word and Spirit

Water is the primary agent of cleansing in Leviticus, which the New Testament uses to symbolize spiritual renewal.

- **The Washing of the Word:** In **Ephesians 5:26**, Paul explains that Christ cleanses the church, making her holy by the "washing of water through the word."

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

Ephesians 5:26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

Ephesians 5:27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

- **Regeneration: Titus 3:5** credits salvation not to human righteous deeds, but to God's mercy through the "washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit."

Titus 3:4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

Titus 3:6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,

Titus 3:7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

3. Full Access to God

Under the Old Covenant, only the priest could wash and present these internal pieces. Because of Jesus, every believer has direct access to God's presence.

- **A Clean Conscience: Hebrews 10:22** directly echoes the imagery of Leviticus 1, inviting believers to draw near to God with a sincere heart, having "our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."

Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,

Hebrews 10:20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,

Hebrews 10:21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, Hebrews 10:22 **let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.**

4. Total Surrender and Consecration

Burning the entire animal meant the worshipper was giving 100% of the costly sacrifice to God.

- It represented the individual holding nothing back.
- In the New Testament, this translates to **Romans 12:1**, which calls believers to present their entire bodies as a "living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God."

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your true and proper worship.

Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

5. A "Pleasing Aroma" to God

The text repeatedly states that the smoke of the burning sacrifice creates a "pleasing aroma to the Lord" (Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17).

- The physical rising of the smoke symbolized the prayers, devotion, and essence of the worshipper ascending to heaven.
- **Ephesians 5:2** directly applies this language to Jesus, stating that He loved us and "gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

Ephesians 5:1 Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children Ephesians 5:2 and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

6. Atonement for General Sinfulness

While specific sacrifices (like the Sin or Guilt offerings) dealt with specific, individual acts of wrongdoing, the Burnt Offering was made to make atonement for the person's general sinful nature (Leviticus 1:4).

- The fire completely consuming the animal showed that the substitute was bearing the full weight of judgment so the worshipper could be accepted into God's presence.

1Peter 2:21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

1Peter 2:22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

1Peter 2:23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

1Peter 2:24 "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed."