

Lesson 13 | February 26, 2023

Sacrifices and Offerings

Study Text: Leviticus 1:1 through 5:19; Romans 8:1–4; 12:1–2; Ephesians 1:7; 2:13–16; 5:2; Revelation 1:5

Central Truth: Old Testament sacrifices foreshadowed Christ's perfect sacrifice.

Key Verse: Ephesians 5:2

Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor (KJV).

Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God (NLT).

Learning Objectives

- Students will recognize the significance of the sacrifice of Jesus.
- Students will appreciate the freedom from sin and guilt provided by Jesus.
- Students will find ways to offer their own sacrifices in worship to God and service to others.

Introducing the Study

Say: As we read about the various sacrifices of the Old Testament and their requirements, they seem very complicated, but the intent was to restore a broken relationship with God and to provide an opportunity to worship Him. The Old Testament sacrifices could be categorized into two broad groups: sacrifices for cleansing and offerings of thanksgiving. This lesson will look at the sacrifices in these two groups.

Opening Activity—Sacrifices and Relationship

Ask. What kinds of things would you sacrifice for the sake of a relationship—with your spouse, your child(ren), a friend—in your life?

Say: The sacrifices required in the Old Testament were all about the relationship between God and His people. That relationship had been broken by sin, and the sacrifices were meant to remove the sin and restore the relationship. However, the only way for the sin to ever be removed entirely was by the perfect sacrifice that would be offered by God in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ. The sacrifices offered by the people were a poor and temporary substitute. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

We do not offer animal sacrifices today, but the Old Testament sacrifices foreshadowed the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. His sacrifice has given us forgiveness for sins and access to God. Because of Jesus, we can come to God with our sacrifices of worship and thanksgiving. Instead of being laborious rituals, these sacrifices reflect the desire of

the worshiper to have a relationship with God. Allow this reality to challenge you to faithfully serve Him.

Part 1—Sacrifices for Cleansing

Burnt Offering

Leviticus 1:1–17; Ephesians 5:2

[Lev 1:1-17 KJV] 1 And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, [even] of the herd, and of the flock. 3 If his offering [be] a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. 4 And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. 5 And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that [is by] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 6 And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces. 7 And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire: 8 And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that [is] on the fire which [is] upon the altar: 9 But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, [to be] a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. 10 And if his offering [be] of the flocks, [namely], of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt sacrifice; he shall bring it a male without blemish. 11 And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar. 12 And he shall cut it into his pieces, with his head and his fat: and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that [is] on the fire which [is] upon the altar: 13 But he shall wash the inwards and the legs with water: and the priest shall bring [it] all, and burn [it] upon the altar: it [is] a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. 14 And if the burnt sacrifice for his offering to the LORD [be] of fowls, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves, or of young pigeons. 15 And the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head, and burn [it] on the altar; and the blood thereof shall be wrung out at the side of the altar: 16 And he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers, and cast it beside the altar on the east part, by the

place of the ashes: 17 And he shall cleave it with the wings thereof, [but] shall not divide [it] asunder: and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that [is] upon the fire: it [is] a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

[Eph 5:2 KJV] 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Say: The first of the sacrifices for cleansing was offered at the altar of burnt offering in the courtyard of the tabernacle. Without this offering, the people could not receive forgiveness for sin. Regardless of how perfect the animal was, the forgiveness provided could never truly remove sin; only the sacrifice of the perfect Son of God could do that. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Resource Packet Item 1: Old Testament Sacrifices

Distribute the information sheet early in your class time so students will have it for reference as you discuss the various types of offerings.

Priests could use three types of animals for the burnt offering: animals from the herd (cattle), the flock (sheep or goats), or a bird (doves or pigeons) (Leviticus 1:3,10,14). While the specifics for the sacrifice of these animals varied, certain characteristics remained consistent with each offering:

1. *Gender and quality:* Whether from the herd or flock, the sacrifice had to be an unblemished male (verses 3,10). The birds could be either gender (verse 14).
2. *Complete sacrifice:* The entire animal, with the exception of the hide (skin) or the bird's crop (esophagus), was burned on the altar.
3. *Accomplishment:* The sacrifices brought "atonement" (verse 4, KJV). Though they did not fully satisfy God's righteous demands concerning sin, they did "purify you, making you right with him" (NLT).

The one who offered a sacrifice as a burnt offering laid his hands on the head of the animal, symbolizing the substitution of the animal's life for his own, sparing him from sin's consequences. The animal was killed, further emphasizing the seriousness of sin, then the blood was sprinkled around the altar (verses 5,11,14). The writer of Hebrews saw the significance in the blood of the sacrifice when he wrote: "Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22, NLT).

As the burnt offering was a "pleasing aroma to the Lord" (Leviticus 1:9, NLT) and brought peace between the worshiper and God, Jesus' voluntary sacrifice for our sins was "a pleasing aroma to God" (Ephesians 5:2). The Old Testament sacrifice was totally consumed by the fire, and Jesus' sacrifice was complete, including His death on the cross. What the burnt offerings foreshadowed, Jesus fulfilled. As a result, we can find forgiveness, cleansing, and peace with God through the shed blood of Christ.

Discuss

- ? In what ways did the sacrifice of burnt offerings foreshadow Christ's sacrifice?
- ? How does the inadequacy of the burnt offerings show our inability to please God?

Sin Offering

Leviticus 4:1 through 5:13; Ephesians 1:7; Revelation 1:5

[Lev 4:1 KJV] 1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

[Eph 1:7 KJV] 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

[Rev 1:5 KJV] 5 And from Jesus Christ, [who is] the faithful witness, [and] the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Say: The second type of offering for cleansing was offered when an individual, or the nation, became aware of a sin they had unintentionally committed— different from the normal offerings. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Reading just a few Scripture passages pertaining to sin reveals that it brings separation from God. The sin offering was for those who became conscious of their sin. Since sin contaminates, the sin offering was for purification. The sinner needed to be cleansed to maintain his position as a member of God's family.

The sin offering applied to sins of ignorance or unintentional transgressions (Leviticus 4:2). Only those who were truly repentant of their sins were forgiven. But these sacrifices covered acts not done in deliberate or intentional rebellion against God. There was no sacrifice for those who deliberately sinned (see Numbers 15:30–31; presumptuous or brazen sins). These intentional sins indicate a contempt for God's Word.

First, the Scripture deals with sin offerings to be presented by a priest who has sinned. Since the priest was a spiritual leader, the requirements for his sacrifice were more costly (a young bull) and more elaborate (Leviticus 4:3–12). Verses 13–21 give instructions concerning the offering for the unintentional sin of the entire community. The elders, as representatives of the community, offered this sacrifice to the Lord.

Second, in verses 22–26, God gave instructions about sacrifices for the sins of the leaders (a male goat). Lastly, verses 27–35 specify the sin offering for other members of the community who sinned unintentionally. When a person realized he had sinned, he was to offer a sacrifice (a female goat) for his sin. God gave assurance that the sin offering would bring atonement and forgiveness (verse 35).

In 5:1–4, Moses gave examples of some of the sins requiring a sin offering, such as witnessing someone sinning and not testifying, or committing personal health violations (verses 2–3). Even a foolish vow not fulfilled required a sin offering (verse 4).

The sin offering involved blood sacrifices to atone for the sins of the people. The slaughter of countless animals over hundreds of years foreshadowed Christ's perfect sacrifice. He shed His blood for our sins. The only true remedy for sin required the death of God's sinless Son. One He can provide our cleansing.

In Ephesians 1:7, Paul lists the benefits believers have in Christ. One of those benefits is "redemption" (KJV), freedom through payment of a ransom. Jesus' death paid the ransom to purchase our freedom. Christ's death also provided the forgiveness of sins. Those who have accepted Christ experience freedom from sin no matter how greatly or how often we have sinned. All glory is due to Him "who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us" (Revelation 1:5, NLT).

Discuss

? How does the sin offering typify Christ?

? Why were the sin offerings for the priest or the community as a whole more costly?

Guilt Offering

Leviticus 5:15–19; Romans 8:1–4

[Lev 5:15-19 KJV] 15 If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering: 16 And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him. 17 And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he wist [it] not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity. 18 And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wist [it] not, and it shall be forgiven him. 19 It [is] a trespass offering: he hath certainly trespassed against the LORD.

[Rom 8:1-4 KJV] 1 [There is] therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For

the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Say: We find very little difference between the sin offering and the guilt offering. Perhaps God dealt with guilt with a special offering because guilt torments so many people. Interestingly, the guilt offering seems to be related to the way we treat the things of God. Perhaps much of the guilt that counselors deal with today is related to our world's disregard for the sacred. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The guilt offering seemed to deal with transgressions concerning the tabernacle or its sacrifices (Leviticus 5:15). This could refer to the improper consumption of sacrificial meat or grain, failure to give God offerings due Him, failure to fulfill vows, or failure to render service due Him. These sins were viewed as unfaithfulness to God's holiness.

Those who committed such a sin were required to sacrifice an unblemished ram and bring an offering for restitution with an additional twenty percent added to it. The required restitution may have been payment for the damage. The restitution indicated the seriousness of the sin and would also be a reminder against future transgressions. This offering was given to the priest (verses 15–16).

In verse 17, God reminded Moses of the responsibility of every believer for his sin. Even if the believer did not realize he had sinned, he was still guilty before God. With this offering, the offender's greatest need—forgiveness—was met (verse 18). If our sin has caused damage, we must make restitution. If we refuse, we continue to feel guilt.

Guilt torments the human race. People in the mental health professions spend hours helping people who are plagued by guilt. Sometimes people, even believers who have been forgiven, experience false guilt. A person with a sensitive conscience may feel guilty over sins they have not even committed. Everyone bears justifiable guilt, because all are sinners by nature and by choice.

Like those in the Old Testament who brought a guilt offering to obtain forgiveness, we can find forgiveness as well. Jesus is also our guilt offering. In addition to becoming the Sacrifice for our sin, Jesus also takes away our guilt.

Paul assures us that “there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1, NLT). When we accept Christ, He sets us free from the power our sin has held over us. God gave His Son “so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit” (verse 4, NLT). Guilt need not rule our lives because Jesus is our guilt offering.

Discuss

- ? In what ways are believers sometimes tortured by guilt over their past sins?
- ? How can people find freedom from their guilt today?

Part 2—Offerings for Thanksgiving

Grain Offering

Leviticus 2:1–16; Romans 12:1–2

[Lev 5:15-19 KJV] 15 If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering: 16 And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him. 17 And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he wist [it] not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity. 18 And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wist [it] not, and it shall be forgiven him. 19 It [is] a trespass offering: he hath certainly trespassed against the LORD.

[Rom 8:1-4 KJV] 1 [There is] therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Say: Some offerings to God are simply a recognition of who He is. They are given in gratefulness for our relationship with Him. The grain offering was presented in worship to God rather than being associated with sin or guilt on the part of the offerer. In fact, yeast, which was often associated with sin or corruption, was not to be added to the grain offering. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The sacrifices and offerings prescribed by the Law not only provided forgiveness for sin and guilt, they allowed worshipers to express gratitude to God. This was true of the meat or grain offering described in Leviticus 2, consisting of flour, oil, and incense,

which the worshiper presented to the priest. The priest then burned a memorial—a portion—on the altar while he retained a portion for himself (verses 1–3).

Baked unleavened cakes or wafers could also be presented as a grain offering (verses 4–5). The same basic ingredients were used in making these cakes, with the exception of incense. Since incense was expensive, the poor could not afford it. By allowing baked offerings without incense, God made provision for the poor. When the priest offered these cakes as a offering, he burned a portion of the cake or wafer on the altar. He then ate the remaining portion (verses 9–10).

Yeast and honey could not be used in the grain offerings (verse 11). Since yeast is usually associated with corruption, some believe this may have been the reason for prohibiting its use at the altar. Honey (probably the syrup from dates and fruits) aided fermentation and could not be burned on the altar.

In addition to the unbaked and baked offerings, the Israelites would also offer baked grain offerings to the Lord at the Festival of Harvest (Exodus 34:22, NLT, feast of weeks, KJV). These could be baked with yeast and honey, but could never be burned as an offering (Leviticus 2:12). The grain offering was to be seasoned “with salt to remind you of God’s eternal covenant” (verse 13, NLT). The worshiper remembered God’s blessings on himself, his family, and the nation. We, too, are to bring offerings of worship to God. He desires that we offer ourselves as a “living and holy sacrifice” (Romans 12:1, NLT). He will transform our lives and help us to know His will for us (verse 2).

Discuss

? According to Leviticus 2:16, what was the purpose of the grain offering?

? How can we offer a “sacrifice of praise to God?” (See Hebrews 13:15.)

Peace Offering

Leviticus 3:1–17; Ephesians 2:13–16

[Lev 3:1-17 KJV] 1 And if his oblation [be] a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offer [it] of the herd; whether [it be] a male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD. 2 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it [at] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. 3 And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that [is] upon the inwards, 4 And the two kidneys, and the fat that [is] on them, which [is] by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. 5 And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which [is] upon the wood that [is] on the fire: [it is] an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. 6

And if his offering for a sacrifice of peace offering unto the LORD [be] of the flock; male or female, he shall offer it without blemish. 7 If he offer a lamb for his offering, then shall he offer it before the LORD. 8 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle the blood thereof round about upon the altar. 9 And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat thereof, [and] the whole rump, it shall he take off hard by the backbone; and the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that [is] upon the inwards, 10 And the two kidneys, and the fat that [is] upon them, which [is] by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. 11 And the priest shall burn it upon the altar: [it is] the food of the offering made by fire unto the LORD. 12 And if his offering [be] a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD. 13 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of it, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation: and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle the blood thereof upon the altar round about. 14 And he shall offer thereof his offering, [even] an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that [is] upon the inwards, 15 And the two kidneys, and the fat that [is] upon them, which [is] by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. 16 And the priest shall burn them upon the altar: [it is] the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savour: all the fat [is] the LORD'S. 17 [It shall be] a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood.

[Eph 2:13-16 KJV] 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition [between us]; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, [even] the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, [so] making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

Say: Another offering of thanksgiving was the peace offering (Leviticus 3:1). This offering could be an offering of thanksgiving, an offering to fulfill a vow, or a voluntary offering (7:12,16). The worshiper brought an offering to God in appreciation of peace that only came through a relationship with God. As we learn to rest in God's presence, we can be grateful for the peace He gives, even when all else is in turmoil. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Unlike many of the other animal offerings, the peace offering did not require an animal of a specific gender. The animal could be from either the herd (Leviticus 3:1) or the flock (verses 6,12), and had to be “without blemish” (verse 1, KJV) or have no defects (NLT). Like the burnt offering, the worshiper laid his hands on the animal’s head. He then slaughtered the animal, and the priest applied the blood to the altar.

Leviticus 7:13 states that the peace offering of thanksgiving “must be accompanied by various kinds of bread made without yeast—thin cakes mixed with olive oil, wafers spread with oil, and cakes made of choice flour mixed with olive oil” (NLT). The portions of these breads offered to the Lord would belong to the priest who offered the sacrifice (verse 14). Offering this sacrifice and eating the meal was a joyous occasion.

Paul reminded the Gentile believers in Ephesus that at one time they had been separated from God because of their sin (Ephesians 2:11–12; see also Isaiah 59:2). But all of that had changed in Christ. He had brought them into a right relationship with God (Ephesians 2:13). Instead of being far away, they were near to God.

Jesus is our peace offering, bringing people to God and giving them true peace (verse 14). No one but Jesus can repair the broken relationship between God and His creation. But Jesus does more than just restore fellowship between humanity and God, He also restores relationships between people. Paul proclaimed that Christ abolished the “enmity” between Jew and Gentile. Whatever the barrier, Christ destroyed the thing that separated Jew and Gentile through His death on the cross (verse 15).

Christ created “in himself one new people from the two groups. Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God” (verses 15–16, NLT). Believers in the Church, regardless of race or background, are one. And through Christ all who accept Him are reconciled to God. By His own sacrifice, Jesus produced what the peace offering foreshadowed—reconciliation of humanity with God, and with each other. We who are believers need to express our thanks to God for this. We were once separated from Him, but now we are near. Now He dwells within the tabernacle of our lives.

Discuss

? How does Christ fulfill the peace offering for believers?

? How can believers demonstrate the peace of Christ to the world around us?

Resource Packet Item 2: My Offerings of Worship

Distribute the work sheet and ask someone to read each Scripture passage aloud. Give a minute or two for personal reflection after each topic.

What Is God Saying to Us?

Say: Jesus came as the perfect Sacrifice to cleanse us from our sins and restore our relationship with God. Out of love and gratitude to Him, we should bring our own sacrifices of worship and thanksgiving as we commit our lives to following Him.

Living It Out

Ministry in Action

- Take some extra time to offer your own sacrifices of worship and thanksgiving to God.
- Tell an unbeliever the good news that Jesus came to give them a relationship with God.
- Pray for unreached people groups in a country where the gospel is not easily accessible.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

Acceptable Offerings.
Genesis 4:2–7

[Gen 4:2-7 KJV] 2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. 4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. 6 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee [shall be] his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

Tuesday:

Costly Offerings.
2 Samuel 24:18–25

Wednesday:

Offerings of Thanksgiving.
1 Chronicles 16:1–6

Thursday:

Offer Yourself in Service.
Romans 12:1–8

Friday:

Offer Your Resources.
1 Corinthians 16:1–4

Saturday:

Offer Your Sacrifice of Praise.
Hebrews 13:10–15