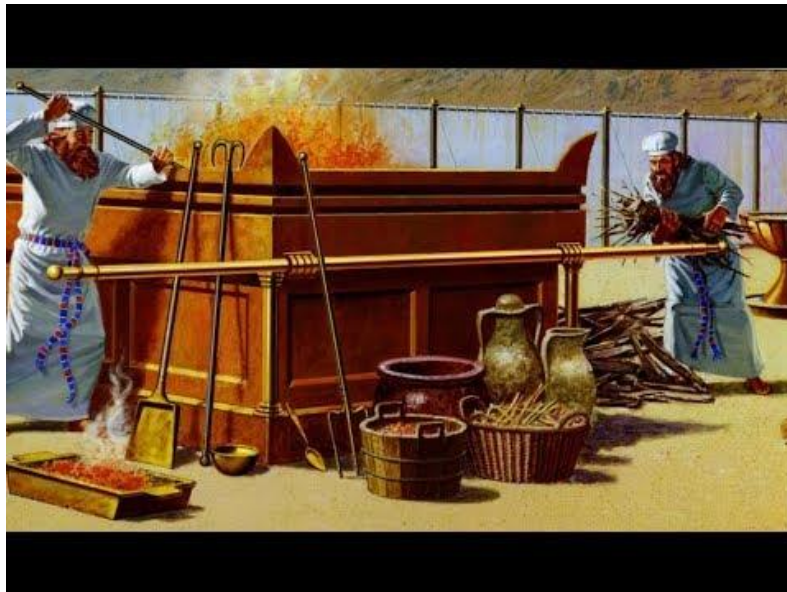


Bible Study Notes

Understanding the Burnt Offering

By C M White
Version 1.4



Understanding the Burnt Offering

Authored by Craig Martin White.

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Contents

Introductory Remarks.....	4
Five Major Sacrifices.....	5
The Burnt Offering Explained.....	8
Concluding Remarks	16
What to read to expand knowledge of the subject.....	16
Appendix: Burnt Offerings (UCG Bible Reading Program)	17
Appendix: Five Offerings of Leviticus 1-7.....	19
Bibliography.....	20

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The purpose and desire is to foster Biblical, historical and related studies that strengthen the Church of God's beliefs and message.

Associated Bible studies

- *Do Sacrifices Provide Forgiveness?*
- *God's Law and Way of Life Before Moses*
- *Protect Your Heart! Nurture a Pure Heart!*
- *What does "having a relationship" with God and Jesus mean?*
- *Will the Temple, Sacrifices & Tribal Allotments be restored during the Millennium?*

Outline of Leviticus

The basis of fellowship with God				The way of life before God as kings and priests					
1-----17				18-----27					
Laws of <u>reconciliation</u>	Laws of <u>priests</u>	Laws of <u>purity for people</u>	Laws of <u>national atonement</u>	Sanctifying the <u>people</u> • Marriage (18) • Culture (19) • State intervention in previous spheres (20)	Sanctifying the <u>priesthood</u>	Sanctifying <u>worship</u> • Feasts • Elements of worship • Name of God	Sanctifying the <u>land</u>	Blessings & Curses	Sanctification through <u>vows</u>
1----7	8--10	11-15	16-17	18-----20	21-22	23-----24	25	26	27

Source: internet

Introductory Remarks

Some Christians do not study or read many parts of the Bible as they are deemed too difficult to understand or there are few to assist with understanding these Scriptures and thus grow the Christian's body of Biblical knowledge.

One area of the Bible over-looked or read around is the sacrificial system of ancient Israel. Amongst the Churches of God there is a very basic understanding of these sacrifices, but you will almost never hear sermons on the subject and there are a miniscule number of articles and booklets that delve into this important part of Scripture.

These Bible study notes are meant as an introduction to the subject – much larger, technical works are available which, alas, very few have the inclination or time to read and absorb.

Perhaps these notes will entice the reader to delve deeper into the subject and provide a foundation and framework to understand the burnt offering, prior to deeper readings.

As such, the purpose of the Bible study is to take a complex Biblical teaching and to simplify it for the reader, hopefully opening minds for further delving into this fascinating topic.¹

¹ There is literature 'out there' on the pagan counterfeits to the Biblical temple, priesthood, sacrifices and so on are of interest as they show us how there are always Satanic efforts against God's truths and way. And they may throw light on some nuances we have difficulty in understanding. Among the literature available are:

- Scurlock, J. (2006). "The Techniques of the Sacrifice of Animals in Ancient Israel and Ancient Mesopotamia: New Insights Through Comparison, Part 1." *Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS)*, vol 44, No.1, pp. 13-49.
- Scurlock, J. (2006). "The Techniques of the Sacrifice of Animals in Ancient Israel and Ancient Mesopotamia: New Insights Through Comparison, Part 2." *Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS)*, vol 44, no 2, pp. 241-64.

Five Major Sacrifices

The book of Leviticus which is devoted primarily to details concerning the tabernacle, priesthood, and offerings, provides explanations for several sacrifices and offerings. **Refer to the Appendix. Five Offerings of Leviticus 1-7 to view these in a table form.**

DeBroeck does a good job of reworking the listing of offerings (*Becoming a Priestly People: A Biblical Theology of Liturgical Sacrifice as Spiritual Formation*, p. 56, footnote 122) which Van Dam assembled in his article "The Burnt Offering in its Biblical Context" (p. 197):

"The legislated offering of *'olah* include:

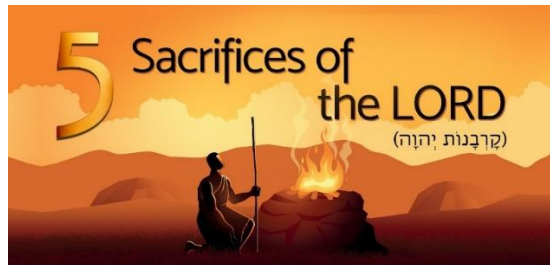
1. Daily, a male lamb in the morning and a male lamb in the evening (Ex 29:38-42; Num. 28:1-8)
2. Each Sabbath, to additional lambs (Num. 28:9-10).
3. At each new moon –beginning of each month– two young bulls, one ram, and seven male lambs (Num. 28:11-14)
4. Each day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread –7 days– two young bulls, one ram, and seven male lambs (Num. 28:17-25)
5. Feast of Weeks –Feast of First Fruits–, two young bulls, one ram, and seven male lambs (Num. 28:26-31)
6. Feast of Trumpets, one young bull, one ram, and seven male lambs (Num. 29:1-6)
7. Day of Atonement, one young bull, one ram, and seven male lambs (Num. 29:7-9), as well as the special burnt offerings for atonement, one ram for the high priest, and one ram for the people (Lev. 16: 3, 5, 24)
8. Feast of Booths –Feast of Tabernacles– 7 days
 - i. First day, thirteen young bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs (Num. 29:12-13)
 - ii. Second day, twelve young bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs (Num. 29:17)
 - iii. Third day, eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs (Num. 29:20)
 - iv. Fourth day, ten bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs (Num. 29:23)
 - v. Fifth day, nine bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs (Num. 29:26)
 - vi. Sixth day, eight bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs (Num. 29:29)
 - vii. Seventh day, seven bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs (Num. 29:32)
 - viii. Eighth day, one bull, one ram, seven male lambs (Num. 29:35-36)
9. Certain purification rituals,
 - i. After childbirth, one lamb (Lev. 12:6) or for the poor, two turtledoves or two young pigeons (Lev. 12:8)
 - ii. On the eighth day after being cleansed from leprosy, a male lamb (Lev. 14:10, 13,19-20) or for the poor, one turtledove or one young pigeon (Lev. 14:21-22, 30).
 - iii. On the eighth day after cleansing of male abnormal genital discharge, one turtledove or one young pigeon (Lev. 15:13-15)".²

The above comprehensive list provides the reader with insights into the enormity of the sacrificial system in the Bible and its high-level importance. It was not some minor thing.

² DeBroeck provides further insights, but these are not summarised in this short Bible study. His entire thesis can be downloaded from the internet.

It was a profoundly serious affair for God, the priests and sinners. In fact, it was a central aspect of worship and an intricate part of the relationship of the Israelite with God.

Most importantly it portrayed Christ's unfathomable sacrifice and the intense seriousness of the relationship a person of God (whether Old or New Testament period) must have. It is not a game. It is not a toy. It is life or death. This is an important lesson from the sacrifices and why they must be preached on, studied, and understood.



There were five main offerings (in two categories) which are outlined in the book of Leviticus:

A. Sweet Savour Offerings (voluntary):

1. **Burnt offering** – read Lev 1; 6:8-13. This offering is not consumed by the priests. Instead, the entire animal is burnt. It is this sacrifice which we will delve into.
2. **Grain offering** – read Lev 2; 6:14-23. This is a crop offering gifted to God. Some of it is apportioned to the priests. However, if they offered it themselves, they could not eat of it (Lev 6:23). Also known as the meal offering.
3. **Fellowship offering** – Read Lev 3; 7:11-34. The worshippers shared in this meal. There were 3 types of fellowship offerings: **thank offering** expressed for blessings or deliverance; **vow offering** followed a vow to give thanks for blessings or deliverance; **freewill sacrifice** offered for blessings to demonstrate gratitude to God. Also known as the peace offering.

B. Sin Offerings (mandatory):

4. **Sin offering** – read Lev 4:1-5:1; 6:24-30. Though similar to the reparation (guilt) offering, a dissecting of the relevant Scriptures reveal that it concerns sins which require the Israelites to be purified from, including unintentional sins.³ Read Lev 10:17 - the offering is partaken by the priest (this forms part of the atonement).⁴ However, if they offered it themselves, they could not eat of it (Lev 4:21; 6:30. Cp 8:17; 9:11). This is also known as the purification offering (see Ex 30:12-15; Lev 17:11).⁵

³ Whether one unintentionally sins or not, sin is sin and must be expunged. One can be born with weaknesses and tendencies; or have thoughts lurking deep down in one's psyche – whether one exercises one's will or not to sin mentally or physically – it is still sin. These are unclean to God and may be typed by uncleanness: "Naturally, one is bound to ask whether or not sin and impurity are one and the same thing or if such things as menstruation and nasal discharges can be classified as moral wrongs. These occurrences are similarly designated unclean ... it is entirely untrue that natural impurities have no effect whatsoever on the relation between God and humanity. Quite the contrary, in fact ... Levels of pollution vary, of course" (Eric Sporer, *Bought with Blood: The Logic of Sacrifice and Atonement in Ancient Israel and in John's Revelation*).

⁴ Let us ask the question "why the sin offerings?" Jay Sklar explains: "... inadvertent sin and major impurity both require sacrifice for atonement. Since both inadvertent sin and major impurity ENDANGER (requiring ransom) and POLLUTE (requiring purgation), **sacrificial atonement must both ransom and cleanse**. The verb used to describe this dual event is the verb kipper and the power of the kipper-rite to accomplish both is due to the lifeblood of the animal" (Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement. The Priestly Conceptions*, p. 187). [emphasis mine]

⁵ "...a party that has done wrong is giving the kopper to the person that they have wronged, by which they appease the injured party and are reconciled. By way of contrast, the English word 'ransom' [Heb = kopper] does not signify that the one receiving the ransom payment has been wronged by the one giving it and need to be appeased for that wrong, as when ransom is paid to a kidnapper who has in no way been wronged by their captive. Indeed, in this last example it is not the injured party who receives the ransom payment but the party who is doing wrong" (Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement. The Priestly Conceptions*, p.68)

5. **Reparation offering** – read Lev 5:14-6:7. In addition to the sacrifice, a restitution to God or another person is required. When something sacred is desecrated, atonement (Heb = *kipper*) is required. This is also commonly known as the guilt or trespass offering.

The first category was voluntary and pictured redemption from sin and reconciliation with God. It was sweet to God.

The second category was mandatory and pictured how sin stinks and is abhorred by God. All of them apart from the Burnt Offering had to be eaten (in part). This portrays Christ's sacrifice and our union with Him:

In this Bible study I concentrate on the first offering.

“The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar?” (1Cor 10:16-18) [this shows that we participate in His blood sacrifice]

“**Why have you not eaten the sin offering in the place of the sanctuary**, since it is a thing most holy and has been given to you that you may bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD?

Behold, its blood was not brought into the inner part of the sanctuary. You certainly ought to have eaten it in the sanctuary, as I commanded.” (Lev 10:17-18)

We must ‘eat’ of Christ's body and ‘drink’ of His blood for the spirit to work in us to enable divinity to grow and develop within us.

Matthew Henry's *Commentary on the Whole Bible* explains the need for these sacrifices:

“From all these laws concerning the sin-offerings we may learn,

1. To hate sin, and to watch against it. That is certainly a very bad thing to make atonement for which so many innocent and useful creatures must be slain and mangled thus.

2. To value Christ, the great and true sin-offering, whose blood cleanses from all sin, which it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away. Now, if any man sin, Christ is the propitiation (1 Jn. 2:1, 2), not for Jews only, but for Gentiles [also].”

The enormous importance of holiness and the sacrificial system which was an essential part of this may be summarised in these verses:

“Then Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the LORD has said: ‘**Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.**’” And Aaron held his peace.” (Lev 10:3)

“This situation calls for a ‘*kopper*’ that averts God's wrath and punishment as a consequent of his fault, and for ‘*purgation*’ that means the cleansing of the contaminate sancta. Both are indicated in *kipper* which is fulfilled by blood. **Thus *kipper* denotes ‘*kopper*’ + *purgation*’ in the *hattat* [sin offering] context. In short, atonement is ‘ransoming *purgation*’ and ‘purifying ransom’ effected by the *hattat* offering” (Gyung Kim, *The hattat ritual and the Day of Atonement in the Book of Leviticus*, p. 24).**

“For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground.

For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore **be holy, for I am holy.**” (Lev 11:44-45)

The Burnt Offering Explained

Although some are opposed to ‘dissecting Scripture’ and encourage others not to delve deeply into it, it is self-evident that it is written in such a way to entice one to do so. It must be delved into and dissected.

This takes time, deep thought, and analysis. Often there are researchers who specialise in various portions of Scripture or Scriptural subjects such as the offerings. It would behoove the Christian to humble themselves to learn from them, within Church doctrinal parameters.

Background

The burnt or ascending offering did not originate at the time of Moses, but one can read about the offering by Noah (Gen 8:20), Abraham (Gen 22:2) and Job (Job 1:5). Abel’s sacrifice was from his flock (Gen 4:4-5; Heb 11:4) and was probably a burnt offering. All burnt offerings were to be of honest gain (II Sam 24:24) which demonstrates obedience and faith; and at least 8 days old (Lev 22:27).⁶

Some burnt offerings were a requirement:

The continual burnt offering for each morning and evening, seven days a week (a lamb - Ex 29:42); Sabbath burnt offerings (2 lambs offered – Num 28:9-10); new moons (2 bullocks, 7 lambs, 1 ram – Num 28:11); festival offerings (II Chron 30:24 (Passover); Num 28:24 (Unleavened Bread); Lev 23:12 (Firstfruits), 18 (Pentecost); Num 29:2 (Trumpets); Lev 16:24 (Atonement); Num 29:13-38 (Tabernacles and Eighth Day).

The offerings were also at the dedication of the altar (Num 7:87; I Kings 8:64); consecration of priests (Lev 8:18; 9:2); Levites (Num 8:12) and people (Lev 9:3-7).

At other times they were offered included completion of a vow (Num 15:8) and Nazarite vow (Num 6:14); cleansing of lepers (Lev 14:19); those with discharge of some sort (Lev 15:15); a Nazarite who has been defiled (Num 6:11); women after bearing babies (Lev 12:6).

Some were voluntary:

In such cases the Israelite would offer this sacrifice out of free-will (Lev 1) and the poor were permitted to offer turtle doves and pigeons (Lev 1:14; 12:18). Even the non-Israelite in their midst could offer (Lev 22:18).

This particular sacrifice was so important that it is repeated day after day and for event after event. Non-stop! This indicates the utter importance of this sacrifice as it demonstrates continual repentance of sin and God’s holiness – His majesty and glory that cannot stand sin. Humans sin all the time, God does not.

⁶ Historical background to the sacrificial systems in nations round-about Israel may be found at <https://www.biblicaltraining.org/library/sacrifice-and-offerings>

Reason for the offering

One specialist explains the reason well:

“... probably the atonement by the burnt offering in Leviticus 1 denotes ‘ransom’ for the offerer’s life from God’s wrath incurred by human *existential deficiency* before *shekinah* of the holy God, as implied in the encounters of humans with the holy God (e.g., Exod 3:5; Isa 6:5). But **it must be acknowledged that the primary purpose of the burnt offering may be ‘devotion to God’ by offering and burning the whole animals on the altar**” (Kim, *The hattat ritual and the Day of Atonement in the Book of Leviticus*, pp. 95-96).

The offeror

One lesson from this sacrifice is that it demonstrates the Lord’s regard for the status or circumstance of the offeror: he who was well off would bring a bull offering; if one were of middle class (using today’s vernacular) would bring a lamb or goat; while the poor could bring a fowl, turtledove or pigeon.

The offering

All sacrifices were to be of the clean category and not the unclean which God’s people were told in no uncertain terms not to consume (Lev 11; Deut 14; Is 66:15-18).

Of the clean, they could only be domesticated and not wild. Why? To demonstrate that one is sacrificing of one’s own possession or self and not adding to their possessions as a pseudo-sacrifice to God.

Perhaps, because they are tame and not wild or rebellious, this pictures Christ docilely allowing Himself to be offered. Note Is 53:7 in this regard.

Further, it had to be male (large, a leader and thus typical of Christ, a male) and without blemish. This is so important to God due to the reverence the Israelite had to exhibit and typological of His Son:

“By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, ‘How have we polluted you?’ By saying that the LORD’s table may be despised. When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the LORD of hosts. And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the LORD of hosts. Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! **I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand.**” (Mal 1:7-10)

The Sacrificial Rite

The Tabernacle court area was where the offeror brought the offering to the priest. He was then taken to the brass altar of burnt offering on the north side which faced the Tabernacle’s door (Lev 17:8-9).

It was there that the offeror laid his hand⁷ on the poor, innocent animal, ignorant of its fate, pressing on it as if he were transferring his sins into it so that it now absorbed the sins. By this act he confessed before God his sins and repented of them accepting that he deserved death and not the innocent animal which he then slew. God then accepted the sacrifice (Lev 1:4).

⁷ This does not preclude the laying of two hands on the animal, but the Scriptures specify just one.

“The first ritual procedure in offering any animal *korban* (excepting birds) was the laying on of hands (*semichah*, סמיכה). The act of *semichah* implied a physical “leaning” on the animal so that the weight of the man was transferred to the animal, symbolizing an investment of identity ... the laying on of hands symbolizes a transfer of identity. Through the laying on of hands, the one leaning confers his identity onto the one being leaned upon” (*What about the Sacrifices?* pp. 11-12, 13)

It must have been rather traumatic and shameful for him to slew the animal and he must have felt almost traumatised by the act.

“... the ritual expressed the worshipper's intimate association with the victim. He is more than a donor: he is regarded as himself involved or represented in what happens to the offering. He brings it near, and sacrifices it himself, first laying his hand upon its head, that it may be 'accepted for him to make atonement for him'. The clue to what this action in all the sacrifices means is to be found in another example of laying-on of hands: in the ceremony by which the Levites were appointed to represent the firstborn of the nation in the service of the tabernacle. On that occasion the children of Israel were required to lay their hands upon the Levites, who were then to be offered as a wave-offering to the LORD. They, in their turn, proceeded to lay their hands upon the bullocks that were to be slain as their own sin-offering and burnt-offering; and thenceforth, themselves atoned for, they were admitted to the tabernacle to perform the service which their brethren might not undertake, and' to make atonement for the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary'. The congregation was clearly not transferring its sins to the Levites in this action, as the sins of the nation were transferred to the scapegoat, but was rather appointing them to stand in its place, to do what it was not qualified to do itself. So it is with the offerer of the burnt-sacrifice. He solemnly designates the victim as standing for him; and he knows that if he brings it with sincerity it is accepted for him.” (*Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, pp. 13-14)

Katherine Smith adds to our understanding:

“When the gift is caused to smoke by the priest on the altar, the gift’s aroma has a soothing effect for YHWH (1:9, 13, 17). That is, because the gift has been offered. YHWH allows the offerer to draw near to his presence without consequence. As the offerer draws near, **he or she is very much aware that their acceptance in the presence of God is because an unblemished animal has died at their hand and in their stead.**” (“Should the Local Church Resist Texts in Scripture that Clash with Western Culture? The Test Case of Leviticus 21:16-24”, *Themelios*, vol 45, no 1, p. 37). [emphasis mine]

The blood flowing from the offering was caught in a bowl by the priest who then proceeded to sprinkle the blood around the altar of burnt offering (Lev 1:5).

Then the animal was skinned by him, and this skin became the possession of the priest (Lev 7:8). The rest was for God (the offeror received nothing).

Following this the animal’s body was chopped up with the separation of the joints and placed on the altar (Lev 1:6-8), washing of the legs and intestines and placed on the altar (Lev 1:9) with the ashes and the body burnt on the altar. Why was this done? To ensure that the animal contained no imperfections.

Salt was also sprinkled on the offering (Lev 2:13; Ezek 43:24).

These pieces of flesh were then completely consumed by fire ensuring that it was a **whole** burnt offering (Lev 1:6-8).



Due to its small size, the exception was the fowl – the head was wrung off by the priest, not the offeror. This allowed the blood to sprinkle at the altar. Then the fowl was opened without pulling it into halves (Lev 1:14-17).

All of this must have been so unpleasant for the sacrificer to be involved in or to behold.

The complete burning of the offering became a very pleasant odour to God (Lev 1:9). Neither the offeror nor priest partook in eating of this offering (unlike the others).

At festivals, however accompanying this was a meal and drink offering (Num 15:3-12). And at the Feast of Trumpets and New Moons, trumpets were blown over the offerings (Num 10:10).

Purpose of the offering and symbolism for Christians

The purpose of this offering was consecration which Paul refers to:

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Rom 12:1-2)

We offer ourselves in service to God and man, completely dedicated in word and deed. Not a dead sacrifice, but one that is living – giving up one’s own will and time in that service.

Typological fulfillment

Each of the offerings typify Christ’s unfathomable love and sacrifice for humanity overall and us individually:

- Grain offering – no blood was offered which may represent His life without sin (rather than His shed blood) (John 6:35)
- Fellowship offering – this offering brought reconciliation and peace with God (Rom 5:1)
- Sin offering – this demonstrates Christ delivering us from the power of sin (Rom 6:6-7)

- Reparation offering – typifies His delivering us from specific sins against the Almighty (II Cor 5:21)
- Burnt offering - what is the Christological typology tied to it?

First of all, the entire animal was consumed by fire – it was not eaten. This appears to portray the complete sacrifice of Christ – His entire life and being was taken up to help us to salvation. “It is finished” (John 19:30) adds to the typology of there being nothing left of His life after the supreme lifetime sacrifice that culminated in His crucifixion.

This sacrifice (as with all of them) typified the role of Christ Himself. In fact, Paul referred to this particular offering in such a context:

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.
And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, **a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.**” (Eph 5:1-2)⁸

This offering was brought to the Lord as needed by the Israelite offeror.

His sacrifice was also portrayed by the daily sacrificial burnt offerings:

“Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: **two lambs a year old day by day regularly.**
One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight.
And with the first lamb a tenth measure of fine flour mingled with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and a fourth of a hin of wine for a drink offering.
The other lamb you shall offer at twilight, and shall offer with it a grain offering and its drink offering, as in the morning, for **a pleasing aroma**, a food offering to the LORD.
It shall be a regular **burnt offering** throughout your generations at the entrance of the tent of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet with you, to speak to you there.
There I will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be sanctified by my glory.”
(Ex 29:38-43)

Having been sacrificed on the stake (or tree), Christ became a sweet-smelling offering to God. In a sense He was a burnt offering on the sacrificial altar for us. His offering of Himself was perfect – the ideal - and completely wipes away all sins for eternity for repentant humans from Adam to the very last. No need for more saviours who sacrifice themselves would ever be need for eternity. His great sacrifice fulfil the past, present and future requirements for the payment of sin for the entire universe and for all eternity. THAT is how marvellous and great His sacrifice was!

Notice a further Christological fulfilment: the priest who officiated at this burnt offering adorned his linen garments and removed the ashes from the previous evening’s sacrifices, placing them by the altar, in the morning. Then he would take off the linen garments and put on his plain clothes and carry

⁸ Notice that the offering aroma ascends up to God. The emphasis is on the ascent: We can lift up our hands in prayer; we lift up our voices in song and praise; Enoch and Elijah were lifted up into the skies; Psalms speaks of the ascension of the chosen one (Ps24; 47; 68; 110; 118); we are called to ascend Zion (Jer 31:6); Christ ascended to heaven. “... the sun, which draws the earth, water, air and life toward itself ... Among humans, there is a strong desire for being lifted up ... humans ... desire to be lifted up beyond the earth to the heavens.” (Lawrence Ligocki, *The Rite of Ascent*, p. 43).

the ashes to place them outside the camp. Upon returning to the camp, the linen garments would be again adorned and now the morning sacrifice was offered.



The Tabernacle of ancient Israel

In the afternoon, the above was repeated – the teaching is that this pictured a “continual” burnt offering of Christ. But also, that the offeror is in continual service to God.

God could continue to be so pleased and happy with His Son’s accomplishments until Christ’s death:

“... and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”” (Matt 3:17)

If we confess our sins, accepting the blood of Christ and asked God to forgive us, He will do so willingly.

As we have seen, Christians are also pictured in the sacrifice:

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as **a living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Rom 12:1-2)⁹

How is this done? Via the Word of God when preached and studied cuts us up:

⁹ *Enduring Word Bible Commentary:*

“i. In the Old Testament, every sacrifice had to be holy and acceptable to God

·*He shall bring a male without blemish* (Leviticus 1:10).

·*But if there is a defect in it, if it is lame or blind or has any serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God* (Deuteronomy 15:21).

ii. The idea of *a sweet aroma to the LORD* is almost always linked to the idea of *an offering made by fire*. There is a “burning” in this matter of a living sacrifice. **It also shows that Paul has in mind the burnt offering, in which the entire sacrifice was given to the Lord.** In some sacrifices, the one offering the sacrifice and the priest shared in the some of the meal, but never in the burnt offering.

iii. The holiness we bring to the altar is a *decision* for holiness, and *yielding* to the work of holiness in our life. As we present our bodies a living sacrifice, God makes our life holy by burning away impurities.” [emphasis mine]

“For the word of God is living and active, **sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow**, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Heb 4:12)

“Then he shall flay the burnt offering and **cut it into pieces.**” (Lev 1:6)

Further

“But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the **fragrance** of the knowledge of him everywhere. For **we are the aroma of Christ to God** among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a **fragrance** from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?” (II Cor 2:14-16)

“but its entrails and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a burnt offering, a food offering with a **pleasing aroma to the LORD.**” (Lev 1:9)

We must also be washed:

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having **cleansed her by the washing of water** with the word.” (Eph 5:25-26)

“but its entrails and its legs **he shall wash with water.** And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a **burnt** offering, a food offering with a pleasing **aroma** to the LORD.” (Lev 1:9)

Of course, the verses in Ephesians above can also be interpreted as spiritual washings or spiritual baptisms, but the principle applies.

Note also one must be pure of heart when we make offerings to God, whether physical or spiritual:

“**Wash me** thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! ...

For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise... [a right spiritual attitude and approach is required prior to committing offerings to God]

then will you delight in right sacrifices, in **burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings**; then bulls will be offered on your altar ...” (Ps 51:2, 16-17, 19)

“So if you are offering your gift at the altar [eg burnt offering] and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and **then come and offer your gift.**” (Matt 5:23-24. See Mark 11:25)

A right heart, cleansed before God, is essential to His acceptance of our sacrifice offered to Him – and thus His application of forgiveness for that sin. Though we might do good things, unless undertaken in the right spirit is not acceptable. Notice:

“You meet him who joyfully works righteousness, those who remember you in your

ways. Behold, you were angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?

We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.” (Is 64:5-6)¹⁰

“What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; **I have had enough of burnt offerings** of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. [then He explains why He has had enough of the offerings:]

“When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? [ie justice is eschewed]

Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations— I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.

Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.

When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil,

learn to do good; seek justice, **correct oppression; bring justice** to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

“Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;

but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” (Is 1:11-20)

In other words, any practice on the surface (sacrifices, feast observance, prayer etc) may look good, but God is not fooled – He looks on the heart, attitude, and sincere approach (ISam 16:7). Why bother appearing so sincere and good while inside one is not pure of heart? Then, and only then, does He accept physical and spiritual sacrifices as Psalm 51:19 demonstrates.¹¹

¹⁰ *Albert Barnes Notes on the Whole Bible*: “And all our righteousnesses - The plural form is used to denote the deeds which they had performed - meaning that pollution extended to every individual thing of the numerous acts which they had done. The sense is, that all their prayers, sacrifices, alms, praises, were mingled with pollution, and were worthy only of deep detestation and abhorrence.” Indeed – one can try and keep the Commandments and other Christian requirements for life and not do it from a pure heart, and being nasty to others, it means nothing to God. In effect it becomes our own righteousness. It is a “form of godliness” or outward appearance (II Tim 3:1-5).

¹¹ “Although Jesus’ task is accomplished, for the believer it is continuing, we are to present our bodies as living sacrifices unto the Lord (Rom 12:1-2). No longer with gory animal sacrifices, but with the sweet smelling savor of committed lives under Christ’s dominion, devoted to His service and worship. Steve Walton presents six applications of sacrificial language and terminology for NT Christians which can be emphasized in group contexts where sacrifices play a significant role. **These are “praise of God” (IPet 2:9; Heb 13:15), “witness” (IPet 2:9; Rom 15:16), “prayer” (Rev 5:8; 8:3), “giving” (Phil 2:17, 25), laying down one’s life for the gospel” (Phil 2:17), and “the consecration of the life to God’s will” (Rom 12:1).** When person in group-oriented contexts are made to realize that their spiritual sacrifice is expressed in these forms it will result in passionate worship, devoted service, and zealous commitment for the cause of God.” (Kelvin Onongha, “The Doctrine of Atonement in Communal Contexts,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, Vol 31, Nos 1-2, 2020, pp. 186-87) [emphasis mine]

Concluding Remarks

From this study, what can we deduce? That regardless of the efficacy of the sacrifices and especially the burnt offering, Christ's is immeasurably greater and was always going to be required:

"... all the animal sacrifices failed to meet man's needs, since the sins that most needed cleansing were beyond the range of their power" (*The Meaning of Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, p. 110).

So, let us please God by accepting His burnt offering and being an offering and blessing to others:

"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, **for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.**" (Heb 13:16)

"So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin." (James 4:17)

Finally, I recommend a reading of Van Dam's article "The Burnt Offering in its Biblical Context", *Mid-American Journal of Theology*, Sept, pp. 195-206 for an in-depth discussion on the burnt offering. It can be found with a simple search on the internet.

The burnt offering and other sacrifices will be restored during the entire Millennium (Ezek 45:15-17) as discussed in the Bible study *Will the Temple, Sacrifices & Tribal Allotments be restored during the Millennium?* they are that important to God. John Whitcomb (and others) has written a particularly good article providing Biblical proof of this. Near the end of his article, he states

"Before the heavens and the earth flee away from him who sits upon the Great White Throne (Rev 20: 11), God will provide a final demonstration of the validity of animal sacrifices as an instructional and disciplinary instrument for Israel. The entire world will see the true purpose of this system. Of course, the system never has and never will function on the level of Calvary's Cross, where infinite and eternal guilt was dealt with once and for all." ("Christ's Atonement and Animal Sacrifices in Israel" p. 217)

May we all truly understand and appreciate the great and eternal sacrifice of Christ for the salvation so generously granted to us; which offerings such as the burnt offering, help in understanding and appreciating.

What to read to expand knowledge of the subject

There are so many excellent works and commentaries on the subject, where does one begin?

- *What about the Sacrifices?* by D. T. Lancaster
- *The Burnt Offering in its Biblical Context* by C. Van Dam
- *The Sacrificial System and the Tabernacle in the Wilderness* by N. Link
- *The Sacrificial System in Ancient Israel* by E. L. Martin
- *Becoming a Priestly People: A Biblical Theology of Liturgical Sacrifice as Spiritual Formation* (pp. 53-62) by X. DeBroeck
- "The Significance of Sacrifice in the Old Testament", *The American Journal of Theology*, by H. Schulz

- *Understanding Sacrifices and Offerings, and whether they are done away in Christ* by R Desilva

Appendix: Burnt Offerings (UCG Bible Reading Program)

<https://bible.ucg.org/bible-commentary/Leviticus/Burnt-offering-instructions/>

Before looking at each of the five main offerings detailed in the first seven chapters of Leviticus, it is recommended that those wishing to study them in much greater depth read a 19th-century book by author Andrew Jukes titled *The Law of the Offerings*. It is available to order through the Internet or you can probably find it at your local library or Christian bookstore, as it is considered the standard work on this topic. While we would not agree with Jukes' book in a number of particulars, it is biblically sound in many important respects and offers some incredible insights into the subject. Be warned, however, that because of its older and somewhat elevated style, it does not always make for easy reading.

Burnt Offerings (Leviticus 1)

We often think of Old Testament sacrifices as simply typical of Christ's death. But there is far more to it than that. As Andrew Jukes explains, offerings were "divided into two great and distinctive classes—first, the sweet savour offerings, which were all... oblations for acceptance; and secondly, those offerings which were *not* of a sweet savour, and which were required as an expiation for sin. The first class, comprising the Burnt-offering, the [Grain]-offering, and the Peace-offering—were offered on the [bronze] altar which stood in the Court of the Tabernacle. The second class—the Sin and Trespass-offerings—were not consumed on the altar: some of them were burnt on the earth without the camp; others the priest ate, having first sprinkled the blood for atonement. In the first class, sin is not seen or thought of: it is the faithful Israelite giving a sweet offering to [the Eternal]. In the Sin-offerings it is just the reverse: it is an offering charged with the sin of the offerer. Thus, in the first class—that is, the Burnt-offering, the [Grain]-offering, and the Peace-offering—the offerer came for acceptance as a worshipper. In the second class, in the Sin and Trespass-offerings, he came as a sinner to pay the penalty of sin and trespass. In either case the offering was without blemish.... But in the [sweet aroma offering], the offerer appears as man in perfectness, and in his offering stands the trial of fire—that is, God's searching holiness; and accepted as a fragrant savour, all ascends a sweet offering to [the Eternal]. In the other, the offerer appears as a sinner, and in his offering bears the penalty due to his offences" (pp. 55-56).

In the case of the burnt offering, we are not "to consider Christ as the Sin-bearer, but as man in perfectness meeting God in holiness. The thought here is not, 'God hath made Him to be sin for us' [2 Corinthians 5:21], but rather, 'He loved us, and gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour' [Ephesians 5:2]. Jesus... both in the Burnt-offering and Sin-offering, stood as our representative.... We have here what we may in vain search for elsewhere—man giving to God what truly satisfies Him" (pp. 56-57). But it is not only the way that Christ lived His life on earth 2,000 years ago that is pictured here. Rather, Christ lives in us today as the same burnt offering. Thus, we are enabled to present *ourselves* as "living sacrifices" (Romans 12:1)—offering a "sweet smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God" (Philippians 4:18) by giving ourselves wholly to Him (compare 2 Corinthians 8:5). Indeed, the burnt offering was wholly consumed, symbolizing "that the worshiper must hold nothing in reserve when coming to God; everything is consumed in the relationship between God and the sincere worshiper" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on Leviticus 1:3).

Jesus, of course, set the perfect example in this. Jukes explains: "Man's duty to God is not the giving up of one faculty, but the entire surrender of all.... I cannot doubt that the type refers to this in speaking so particularly of the parts of the Burnt-offering; for 'the head,' 'the fat,' 'the legs,' 'the inwards,' are all

distinctly enumerated. 'The head' is the well-known emblem of the thoughts; 'the legs' the emblem of the walk; and 'the inwards' the constant and familiar symbol of the feelings and affections of the heart. The meaning of 'the fat' may not be quite so obvious, though here also Scripture helps us to the solution [Psalm 17:10; 92:14; 119:70; Deuteronomy 32:15]. It represents the energy not of one limb or faculty, but the general health and vigour of the whole. In Jesus these were all surrendered, and all without spot or blemish. Had there been but one affection in the heart of Jesus which was not yielded to His Father's will... then He could not have offered Himself or been accepted as 'a whole burnt-offering to [the Eternal].' But Jesus gave up all: He reserved nothing. All was burnt, all consumed upon the altar" (pp. 63-64). This is the same end to which we strive—through Christ living His life in us today.

Appendix: Five Offerings of Leviticus 1-7

	Name	Gift	Our work	Priest's work	God's portion	Our portion	Priest's portion	Symbol for self	Symbol for Jesus
Sweet Savor	Burnt offering	Bull, sheep, goat, dove, pigeon	Bring to tabernacle, lay hands on it, kill, skin, wash, give priest	Catch blood and sprinkle at altar. Burn everything on altar	Everything except for skin	none	Skin	Consecration of the person (Rom. 12:1)	Christ gave Himself as a whole burned offering (Eph. 5:2; Heb. 8:14; Ps. 40; Is. 53:7)
	Meal offering	Fine flour or parched grain with oil, salt, frankincense. No leaven or honey	Finely grind grain; bring offering to priest.	Put handful of flour on altar and all the frankincense	Handful of flour; all the frankincense	none	All that was not given to the Lord	Consecration of their toil and what God had blessed them with	Christ's life and work offered to God as perfect and fragrant
	Peace offering	Bull, lamb, goat – male or female	Bring to tabernacle, lay hands on it, kill it, open it, take out and give to God fat & kidneys	Catch blood, sprinkle at altar; wave breast and right shoulder before Lord	All that was placed on altar	Everything not burned or given to priest	The "wave breast" and the "heave shoulder"	In communion with God	Christ is our peace offering bringing us into communion (Rom. 5:1; Col. 1:20) and we feed on Him (John 6:53-56; Matt 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)
Restoring	Sin offering	Bull, goat, or lamb	Same as above	If for others, smear blood on horns of altar and pour rest at base of altar. If for nation, sprinkle blood before veil and on horns of altar of incense	Everything not put on altar burned outside the camp	none	All that remained of the meat could be eaten by priest	Forgiveness of sin	Christ is our sin offering (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24)
	Trespass offering	Female lamb or kid, two turtle doves or young pigeons, or 1/10 th Ephah of flour. No oil or frankincense	Same as above	smear blood on horns of altar and pour rest at base of altar.	Everything that was burned on the altar	none	Everything that wasn't burned on altar	Restitution for sin	Christ is our trespass offering (Col. 2:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:19). See Psalm 69:4

Source: Internet

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Understanding the Burnt Offerings

**Craig M. White
GPO Box 864
Sydney
Australia 2001**

**www.friendsofsabbath.org
hrp11@iprimus.com.au**

