

NOTES AND QUESTIONS FOR INDUCTIVE STUDY IN THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS INDIVIDUALLY OR IN GROUPS -

PART TWO - SACRIFICE, THE WAY TO BE CLEAN – CHAPTERS 1-7

The idea of animal sacrifices seems completely foreign to our New Testament. concept of the gospel of Jesus Christ - which shows how poorly we appreciate the full significance of the central event of that gospel, the death of Jesus on the cross. The sacrifices of Leviticus are teaching aids. They explore in detail the meaning from many facets of Jesus' sacrifice for us. The better we understand them the better we will understand the cross.

Leviticus 1-5 describes five kinds of sacrifice; chapters 6 & 7 the priests who offered them. The main ideas they teach are as follows:-

1. **PURPOSE** - Why? All have to do with being clean from our sin before God which is the condition for Him living among, and for us today, in, His people. The first three sacrifices, Leviticus 1-3, were to be offered regularly as God determined and have to do with staying clean. The last two were to be offered when sin occurred and man became aware of it; they were for getting clean. We need to have a clear working understanding of how the cross gets us clean when we first become Christians, keeps us clean in normal Christian living, and whenever necessary gets us clean again, and again, and again...
2. **PLACE** - Where? These sacrifices could only be offered in one place, the tabernacle, and later the temple.(Deut.12) Our sin can only be removed at one place, the cross of Calvary. For those who lived too far from Jerusalem there was a special arrangement; they could also be offered at home - forgiveness is first a family affair. The Passover too was to be celebrated as a family.
3. **PROGRAMME** - When? God required sacrifices according to a detailed timetable;-
 - twice daily (Num.28:4) - every day should begin and end with Jesus Christ and a realization of what He has done for us on the cross.
 - every sabbath (Num.28:9) - 'sabbath' means 'rest'. We can rest in what He has done for us and so release His mighty energy through us.
 - each new month (Num.28:11) - every new phase of life and every new venture should spring from Christ.
 - at the feast of Passover (Lev. 23; Num.28) - which speaks of Christ's death and resurrection.
 - at the feast of Pentecost (Lev.23; Num.28) - which looks forward to the giving of the Holy Spirit, only possible because of the cross.
 - at the feast of Tabernacles (Lev.23; Num.29) - which pictures the Christian life in temporary bodies, which begins at the cross and will end with Christ's return.
 - on special occasions like childbirth (Lev.12) - He is relevant to every detail of our individual and corporate lives.
4. **PARTICULARS** - What? Each sacrifice explains a different aspect of the cross.
 - the burnt offering (chap.1) - our sin is totally forgiven and destroyed in God's sight because Jesus gave Himself up totally for us.(Eph. 5:2)
 - the grain offering (chap. 2) - because of the cross and the Spirit who lives in us, we can understand and apply His word.(Jn.6:51)

- the peace offering (chap.3) - because of the previous two we can enjoy peace with God and peace with man.(Eph.2:13-16)
- the sin offering (chap.4) - unintentional sin because of ignorance, until God reveals it by His word.(I Jn.1:7 & 10)
- the guilt offering (chap.5) - intentional sin because we know what the Bible says but fail to relate it to our situation until the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin by taking away peace.(Matt.11:28; Jn.16:8)

5. PROHIBITIONS - What not? There were two parts of the sacrifices that the priests were forbidden to eat.

the fat - the best (Gen.4:4; 45:18) was not available to them yet because

the blood - His life (Lev.17:14; Matt. 26:27,28) could be received into us only when the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost, which in turn was only possible when He had died on the cross.

6. PRIESTS - For whom? The priests were invited to eat portions of every offering except the burnt offering because the cross is for our benefit, to meet our needs, not God's. All Christians are priests.(I Pet.2:9; Rev.1:6) All Christians are meant to enjoy all that the cross has done for them all the time.

7. PLEASING - To whom? The pleasing aroma of sacrifice reminds us that God alone was pleased with the life and death of Jesus.(Eph.5:2; Phil.4:18; II Cor.2:14) If we are 'crucified with Christ' (Gal.2:20) our lives will be pleasing to God, and we are free of the need to please others.

8. PICTURES - Of whom and what? The symbols used are familiar ones throughout the Bible.

- a lamb - Christ (Jn.1:29; I Cor.5:7), His purity and innocence.

- a goat - us (Gen.27; Matt.25:32,33), our dirtiness and deception.

- male or female - all of us are accepted without distinction in Christ. (Gal. 3:28)

- grain - the word of God (Lk.8:11) which must first be broken down for us.

- oil - the Spirit (Heb.1:9) who when mixed with the word makes it palatable.

- frankincense - prayer (Rev.8:3,4; Lk.1:10,11) our response to His word.

- salt - covenant (Matt.5:13) God keeps His word.

- a bull was presumably for the whole community what a lamb was for the family and the individual. Jesus did not just die for me...

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What instructions regarding the burnt offering illustrate the completeness of Christ's work on the cross for us? What difference does it make to our lives to understand and experience this message?(I Jn.1:7)

2. What were the essential elements in the grain offering? What does each one represent? What therefore did the grain offering mean to the people of those days? What does it mean to us now? What was to be excluded from this offering and why? Why was some given to the priests?(I Cor.9:9-11)

3. How was the peace offering different from the burnt offering? What different purpose might it have had? Why is this message an important part of Christian worship?(Matt.5:21-26; 18:15-18)

4. What four situations are described in which a sin offering is to be made? How is each offering slightly different? Why does each case need to be described separately?(I Jn.1:9)

5. How is the guilt offering different from the sin offering? Why is some of the guilt offering, the sin offering and the peace offering for the priest?(Jas.5:14-16; I Jn.5:16,17)

6. What further instructions about the five offerings are given in chapter six and seven? Why are they important? Who else should benefit when we acknowledge sin or guilt?(Lk.19:8)