

Sacrifice by Fire: Leviticus 1 Explained

Scriptures for Today: Leviticus 1:10-17

""Leviticus 1:10-17

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.""

Introduction — The God Who Teaches Us How to Draw Near

Before we open Leviticus 1:10–17, we need to see where we already are in the chapter and in the book.

1. What happened immediately before these verses? (Leviticus 1:1–9). The first nine verses introduced the **burnt offering**—the foundational sacrifice of Leviticus. God spoke from the tabernacle and told Moses *how sinful man may approach a holy God*.

Verses 1–9 taught the procedure for a burnt offering **from the herd** (a bullock): a male without blemish, voluntarily brought, hands laid on the head (symbolizing substitution), the offeror kills it, the priests handle the blood, the whole animal is burned on the altar, it rises as a “sweet savour unto the LORD.”

It taught one truth above all: **Approaching God requires sacrifice, substitution, and blood — pointing straight to Jesus Christ.** Now verses 10–17 continue that same offering but expand it.

2. How do these verses fit into the chapter (Leviticus 1:10-17)? Leviticus 1 is one unified teaching: “The Burnt Offering.” But God, in His mercy, makes provision for **different people with different resources**. The chapter contains **three levels** of worshipers:

Verses 1–9 — if a man can bring from the herd

Verses 10–13 — if a man can bring from the flock

Verses 14–17 — if a man can only bring birds

Same offering. Same meaning. Same symbolism. Same atonement. Different economic abilities. These verses show us:

God does not accept less of a sacrifice — He accepts less of an animal. The teaching stays the same. The worship stays the same. Grace makes room for everyone.

3. How do Leviticus 1:10–17 fit into the entire book of Leviticus? Leviticus is a book about **holiness, worship, and access to God**. It is the manual for approaching God under the Old Covenant. Leviticus 1 is the doorway into the whole book.

The burnt offering teaches: **God is holy, Sinful man cannot approach Him without a substitute, Blood is required, Atonement costs something, Worship is not casual — it is costly.**

And the structure of Leviticus 1 teaches a deeper gospel truth: **Salvation is the same for all — rich or poor, strong or weak — because the sacrifice points to Christ, not the value of the animal.**

Whether the offering was a bull, a sheep, or a bird, the symbolism was identical: a substitute dies, blood is shed, the whole offering is consumed, a sweet savour rises, God is satisfied.

Only Jesus Christ fulfills every detail. Leviticus 1 is Christ from beginning to end.

Leviticus 1:10–17 continues the lesson God began in verses 1–9. The first section taught how a man brings a burnt offering from the herd. Now God shows how the same offering is brought from the flock or from birds. The procedure changes slightly, but the meaning never changes. Every sacrifice points to Christ. Every detail matters. And in this section, we see the mercy of God, who makes a way for every worshiper — regardless of wealth — to approach Him through blood, through sacrifice, and through a substitute. Leviticus 1:10–17 is God saying: “You can come to Me — every one of you — but you must come through the sacrifice I have appointed.”

Verse 10 — A Male Without Blemish

""Leviticus 1:10

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.""

The rules remain unchanged: **A male** — strength and leadership. **Without blemish** — purity and perfection. Why? Because this offering **typifies Christ** — the Lamb “without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:19).

Whether the animal was: large (a bull), small (a goat or sheep), smallest (a bird) — the symbolism never changed: **God accepts only perfection — and only Christ is perfect.**

Verse 11 — The Blood Sprinkled

""Leviticus 1:11

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.""

Notice: **The worshiper kills the offering.** This teaches personal responsibility for sin. Someone else's religion cannot atone for your sin. You must come personally. **The priest handles the blood.** A picture of Christ, our High Priest. **Blood is sprinkled around the altar.** Blood surrounds the place of worship.

Because **without shedding of blood is no remission** (Hebrews 9:22). Notice this doesn't say without sprinkling of blood there is no remission. The Bible, in the New Testament, says without shedding of blood. Jesus is "THE" sacrifice that pays for sin and His offering is different than these but these are a picture of the offering to come.

Why "northward"? The north side was associated with judgment in many Scriptures throughout the Bible. Christ bore the judgment of God in our place.

Verse 12 — Cut, Laid in Order, Placed on the Fire

""Leviticus 1:12

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: ""

Every part was cut open. Nothing hidden. Nothing concealed. Nothing left unexposed. This teaches: **1) God sees everything. 2) Worship requires openness and honesty. 3) The sacrifice must be fully yielded.**

The priest "lays them in order." God is a God of order — not confusion (1 Corinthians 14:40). God wants all things to be done decently and in order. ALL THINGS. The fire represents: judgment, purification, acceptance.

Christ, our sacrifice, passed through the fire of God's wrath in perfect obedience.

Verse 13 — Total Consumption and a Sweet Savour

""Leviticus 1:13

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.""

The inwards (heart, organs) and legs (walk) were washed. Symbolizing: inward purity and outward purity. Christ alone fulfilled both. We do not. Christ does. We are not THE sacrifice. The Lamb of God is THE sacrifice.

Then **the whole offering was burned** — nothing held back. This is why the burnt offering represented **complete dedication**. And God calls it “**a sweet savour**.” Not because God enjoys death — but because the sacrifice points to Christ, whose obedience was perfectly pleasing.

Verse 14 — Provision for the Poor

""Leviticus 1:14

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.""

This is God's mercy. Not everyone owned cattle or flocks. But even the poorest in Israel could bring a bird.

The ground is level at the altar. The cross is for all. The offering changes form — not meaning. God is showing that anyone can bring a sacrifice to God. And that goes for the same in this church. You don't have to be rich to bring sacrifices to God.

Bring yourself. Bring your time. Go out and preach the Gospel with us. Bring a good attitude to church. Bring joy to this church. Bring peace to this church. Bring good things to this church.

Verse 15 — The Head Removed, the Blood Drained

""Leviticus 1:15

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:""

A violent picture. The head twisted and pulled off. The blood drained out beside the altar. God is teaching something: sin is violent, atonement is costly, and life is in the blood.

And please hear me—**not every detail in these sacrifices is a one-to-one match with Jesus Christ**. For example, “wring off his head” means the priest twists and removes the bird's head. That did not happen to Jesus. There are actions in these offerings that symbolize truths about Christ but did not literally occur in His crucifixion, burial, or resurrection.

But the **principles** point straight to Him: His head was crowned with thorns, His blood was poured out, His life was given fully and voluntarily.

The sacrifice points to Christ—not by copying every action—but by revealing the cost, the violence, and the total surrender required for sin to be atoned for.

When the priest wrung the bird's blood at the side of the altar, it showed that even the smallest, poorest offering must come to God through blood. The base of the altar was the place where every sacrifice laid its life down, where blood accumulated, where atonement was visibly acknowledged. The wringing showed nothing was held back. The pouring showed the life belonged to God. And the location showed that all access to God begins at the altar and through blood.

All the blood from the sacrifices was poured at the base of the altar. It flowed downward into the trench or collection area around the altar, where it mixed with the ashes and remains. Then, just as God commanded, the ashes and waste—including that accumulated blood—were carried outside the camp to a clean place. The entire system pointed to Jesus Christ, whose blood was poured out and who suffered outside the gate for us.

Verse 16 — The Crop Removed and Cast Away

""Leviticus 1:16

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:""

The "crop" = the stomach or contents of the bird. It had to be removed. Why? Because God requires **clean sacrifice**, not mixed with filth.

This teaches: purity, separation, sincerity. And it is thrown on the **east side**, the place of the ashes. Ashes represent both: judgment, completion. Christ bore our judgment. Christ finished the work.

Ashes on the east side, I believe, means that your sin has been judged, your offering is complete, and the impurity is removed from the presence of God.

Verse 17 — Not Divided, Fully Offered

""Leviticus 1:17

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.""

The bird is opened — but *not torn apart*. Even the smallest sacrifice retains its dignity. Why? Because the offering represents Christ — and Christ cannot be mutilated or corrupted.

Again: all is burned, all is given, all ascends as a sweet savour. The smallest worshiper with the smallest offering produces **the same sweet savour** as the richest man with the largest bull. Because the value is not in the animal — it is in **what the sacrifice points to**.

Application — What Do We Learn From Leviticus 1:10–17?

- 1. God Makes a Way for Every Person to Come to Him.** Bull, sheep, bird — God receives worship from all. No one is too poor, too weak, or too insignificant. The gospel is the same today: **Whosoever will may come.**
- 2. God Requires a Substitute — Always.** Blood is shed in every level of this offering. No exceptions. No forgiveness without sacrifice. Christ is the only substitute who truly satisfies God.
- 3. Worship Requires Surrender, Openness, and Order.** The animal is: cut, opened, washed, laid in order, and consumed. God is teaching us: open your heart, bring your whole life, hold nothing back, let God cleanse what is inward and outward, and half-worship is not worship.
- 4. The Smallest Offering, Given Sincerely, Pleases God.** A bird offered with the right heart was **just as sweet** to God as a bull. God measures the heart — not the size of the gift.
- 5. Everything in Leviticus 1 points to Jesus Christ.** The male without blemish. The substitute dying. The blood poured out. The fire of judgment. The complete surrender. The sweet savour. Christ is the fulfillment of every sacrifice.

Conclusion — A Fire That Still Speaks

Leviticus 1 began with a bull, continued with a sheep or goat, and ended with a dove or pigeon. But the message never changed:

God is holy. Man is sinful. Blood is required. A substitute must die. And God receives the offering when it is fully consumed.

And all of it pointed forward to one sacrifice: **Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.** He was: without blemish, offered freely, slain for our sins, consumed under the fire of God's wrath, received as a sweet savour.

So the message of Leviticus 1:10–17 is this: **You can come to God. You can draw near. You can worship Him. Not by your wealth, not by your works, but by the sacrifice God has provided — Jesus Christ.**

Let's pray.