

OFFERINGS & SACRIFICES

Bible Study on the Book of Leviticus

INTRODUCTION

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Imagine worship five hundred, or a thousand years from now. We would like to believe that everything would be the same. Meaning there will be some sort of worship center like a church, cathedral, synagogue, or mosque. Then a leader from the front directs worship albeit in music, prayer, or with spoken words. Funds are collected and many other ceremonies commence. Religion, like so many things evolve and change over time. The idea or beliefs can remain the same but the practices or rituals can alter over time.

Visualize if instead of our current system of worship, those in the future uses elementals, such as fire, water, wind, and earth to commune with God. As a substitute for music a large fire or wind chimes are used. Instead of a main speaker water is transferred from a jug to another dish as a form of worship. People give land or other natural items instead of money so the church can operate. All of this sounds strange but before the practices we have now religion was a little different in the past.

During the time of the Old Testament and parts of the New Testament, animal sacrifice was very common. Now it seems archaic but at that time, every religion had some form of animal sacrifice. This wasn't due to blood lust or cruelty, but sacrifice was considered worship. To even the Romans and Greeks, animal sacrifice was a requirement when dealing with the gods. This practice was common amongst the Israelites, Egyptians, Assyrians, and many other cultures. Because of this when Christians came on the scene and said, "you no longer need animal sacrifice", is akin to someone saying, "you know longer need to worship God to a group of religious people". Doesn't make sense.

Therefore, when thinking of Leviticus, the first thing that comes to mind are sacrifices, laws, blood, and rituals. Due to this book having these ancient practices some try to ignore or disavow the truths found within the book. A typical belief is that Leviticus is only for religious leaders or only pertain to Jews. The book of Leviticus wasn't for a few choice individuals but for everyone. Anyone desiring to learn more about God can benefit from this book.

Leviticus is about worship. It has a wealth of knowledge in learning how to prepare oneself for worship and communing with God. The Israelites during the time of Moses were to have reverence for God and teaching them rituals and practices was supposed to help build that bond with Him. Getting closer to God isn't just for the ancient Israelites but for anyone who refers to themselves as a follower of the Lord.

For some reason, a common idea and behavior is to choose lessons in the Bible when it's convenient. It doesn't mean that everything is followed exactly but we shouldn't choose to ignore truths because it interferes with our habits. This is why Leviticus is important for modern day believers in God. While Genesis lays a foundation of the Bible through characters and narrative stories; Leviticus does it through laws and rituals.

The title of this book, Offerings and Sacrifices, is about what we bring to God in worship and sometimes what it cost. We like the idea of gaining blessings and a relationship from God but hate the concept of sacrifice and giving something up to obtain it. Worship isn't just about showing up at church, hearing a good message, singing a random song, being good for a few hours, and then returning to your everyday life as though religion is nothing more than a pick me up. Worship is about preparing oneself to come in contact and commune with the Most High. The animal sacrifices and laws allowed the ancient

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Israelites as individuals and a community to grow closer to God. Now, worship can provide the same function as a means of building a relationship with God with every service.

While reading through the book of Leviticus treat some areas as a metaphor in worship and preparing oneself for God. We don't use animals for sacrifices so clearly those practices will not pertain. However, it doesn't mean that we can't use these rituals as a lesson for current day worship. Also, there are a plethora of valuable standards that God has for His people. Learn from these ideals, be blessed, and let's have some fun.