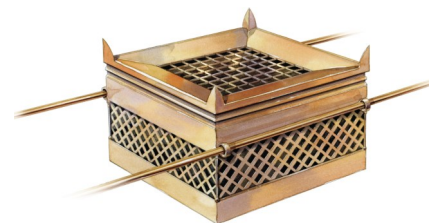


**Introduction** In the Bible, sacrifice is the act of offering something to God to gain acceptance, atone for sin, or express gratitude. It can also refer to the willingness to give up time, possessions, & energy to work for God's. Sacrifices always included the offerer, the offering, and the mediator who administered. The Hebrew word for 'offering' or 'sacrifice', describes the act of approaching God, 'Korban' meaning 'brought near', becoming close to, suggesting relationship. The Hebrew word for 'offering' can refer to a gift to God.

**The first Sacrifices** In Genesis 4 we read about the first ever sacrifices. God accepted Abel's lamb, but not Cain's grain. There are different ideas as to why. Did Abel bring the best, while Cain brought the ordinary, or Abel's was a sin offering, Cain's a thank offering, we don't fully know. All the main O.T. people offered sacrifices Genesis 8:20, 12:7, Job 1:4-5



**The Altar** The earliest altars were often raised earth with a simple flat stone as a surface. Exodus 20:24-25. Later they could be all stone. By the time of the Tabernacle the altar was more developed. It was covered in



bronze over acacia wood. The poles were to carry from place to place. The horns on the corners represented God's power. It was 7'5" square & 4'5" tall. There was also a smaller altar for incense.

**Blood in the O.T.** It seems odd to us today that animals were sacrificed. God told his people not to drink blood. Genesis 9: 4-6, Leviticus 17 :11. The blood of animals had a purpose, to atone for us to God, they became our substitute. Romans 6:23 teaches a death is required to pay for sin, meaning the cost of sin was very high. NB A key concept to understand is before God, sin brings defilement. Leviticus 18:24-25, 30

## Questions

What does this tell us about God's acceptance of people?

**Offerings and Sacrifices** All the many sacrifices show us something of the work of Christ on the cross.

*"The many perfections of Christ could not be explained by any one animal sacrifice"* . -Matthew Poole (1624–1679)

Each offering taught the Jews something about sin & God.

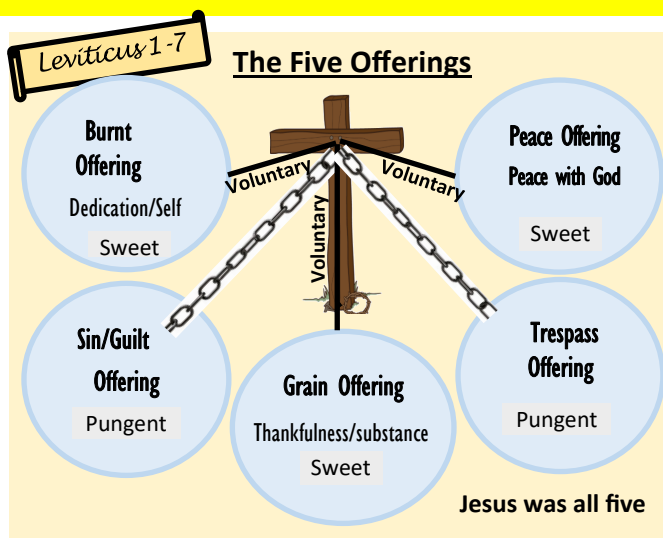
**Burnt Offering** Leviticus 1 v4 is about atonement, which means 'cover over.' Everything on the animal that was sacrificed had to be burnt v9. This was a sign of totally given up to God. The Hebrew word for "burnt offering" actually means to "ascend," literally to "go up in smoke." It was a payment for sin & act of devotion.

The person who brought the animal had to lay their hand on the head of the animal to represent that the animal was identified with them for their sins v4. The only part the priests were allowed, were the skins.

**Grain Offering** Leviticus 2 This was a gift of thanks to God. People would bring fine flour, which had oil, incense, and salt added to it. A part was burned on the altar, with the remainder eaten by the priests. It did not involve a great deal of ceremony. The grain offering always accompanied the Burnt Offering. The grain offering (Hebrew *minkhah*, 'gift, present') was a way to express worship to the Lord through a gift, recognizing Him as Lord over the life of the worshiper. It had to have no yeast, which was often a symbol of sin 1 Corinthians 5:8.



Only the priests could eat the offering, as it was a sacred meal.



**Peace Offerings or sometimes called a Fellowship Offering** Leviticus 3 The Hebrew name is

'Zevah Shelamim' from the root word 'shalom'. This was unique in the offerings as the offerer got to share in the offering too. When an animal from the herd (This uniquely could be female) or flock is killed, the meat was ceremonially waved and given to the priests, worshippers and their guests got to share a meal with God. This speaks of peace with God, the peace of God, and peace with others. The laying on of hands 'semikhah' inferred the transfer of guilt (also in Burnt Offering). The fat had to be cut off and burnt v16. This offering was also given after a vow was made.



**The Sin/ Purification Offering** Leviticus 4 - 5:13 A sin offering was for the atonement for both sins



committed in ignorance and unintentionally, this was usually for failing to follow the rituals correctly. Also for the ceremonially unclean. This is different from the main sin offering required by God on the great Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), when the sins of the entire nation were atoned for. (Leviticus 16). By using the blood and throwing away the rest of the animal, God was demonstrating in a very dramatic fashion that it was only the blood that atoned for Israel's sin. The type of sacrifice depended on the status of the person bringing it. A priest had to give a bull, a commoner had to give a goat. The poorest two doves. Luke 2:24

**The Trespass/Guilt Offering** Leviticus 5:14+ This is different from the Sin Offering. The trespass or guilt offering is primarily about making reparations for sins, often against others. If someone stole a goat, they would pay back 4x its value and then offer this sacrifice. It demonstrates the seriousness of our violations against God (even accidental ones) and against one's fellow man 6:1-5. In both the sin offering and Guilt offering the priest could eat some of the offering. Later in 1 Samuel 2:12-17 Eli's sons abused this position.

**General Notes** There are also various other offerings which are subsets of the other offerings, like the wave offering, heave offering and thank offering. People might think it was a waste of animal life to kill so many for 'mere rituals', when they were a good source of food, but remember the perfume in John 12:3-5. A priest was on duty at the entrance to the tabernacle/temple to inspect the offering Lev 1:3, in one sense it was an inspection of the offerer, as much as the offering, to see if they were trying to give to God, something that wasn't the best. Ultimately it was the offerer who really needed God's acceptance. One repeating theme in the O.T. that God is looking for far more from us than sacrifice. Psalm 40:6, 51:16-17 Hosea 6:6, Micah 6:6-8, God warns not to approach his table in a inappropriate way. Malachi 1:7-8

## Questions

How can we see echo's of the work of Jesus in these laws?

**Sacrifice in the New Testament** A key concept in the N.T. is Jesus is the once and for-all sacrifice for our sins. John the Baptist used sacrificial language about Jesus John 1:29. Other NT passages explain how Jesus was a fulfilment of all the OT sacrifices. Hebrews 9:28, 10:10-14, 1 John 4:10

**Sacrifice in our lives** Romans 12:1-2 We as followers of Christ, are living sacrifices and are called to live sacrificially. In our times, we are the temple, the priests, and offering sacrifices. Ephesians 5:1 gives the example of love as a pleasing offering to God.



Offerings have to be from the right heart. 1 Corinthians 13:3. The widow who gave her small mite, as a financial offering Mark 12:41-44, was praised for giving her all. God does not look at our offerings to him in terms of size or human worth, but the hearts of those who come to him. We cannot impress God, or win favour due to our actions or contributions, but our surrender to him alone.

## Questions

Any comments or questions

May 18th - Worship. July 6th - The JW's