

# Truth for Today

The Bible teaching radio programme

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## Christ in all the Scriptures (Luke 24:27): Christ as seen in the Offerings

If we were giving an overall summary of the Bible, we might simply say that the Old Testament outlines events before Jesus was born; the Gospels tell of Christ's coming into this world and His life, death and resurrection; then the Epistles contain teachings for Christ's followers; and, finally, the book of Revelation shows Christ revealed throughout time with particular details about Christ in relation to future events.

Does this mean that there is nothing of Christ in Scripture before the Gospels? Not a bit of it! We are seeing in this short series that the Old Testament is full of Christ, fulfilling Luke 24:27 when Jesus, while walking with two people towards the village of Emmaus, began at Moses and all the prophets and expounded unto them in **all** the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Last week, Arthur Goodwin looked at Christ as seen in the Tabernacle, dealing with Scriptures mainly in the book of Exodus. This week we will look at Christ as seen in the Offerings, considering mostly Scriptures in the next Bible book, Leviticus.

The order of the books in the Bible is important. Exodus tells us of God's people being redeemed and having a new relationship with Him. Leviticus moves from that basis to show how the redeemed people can approach God in worship and have fellowship with Him by living lives appropriate to their new relationship with God and that worship. So in verse 1 of Leviticus, God speaks to His people from the tabernacle, right in their midst, and not as in Exodus from the top of a mountain.

The first 7 chapters of Leviticus are taken up with our subject today of the offerings. The 5 offerings are outlined up to chapter 6:7 and then further details to help the offerer are set out from verse 8 of chapter 6 to the end of chapter 7; these further details are usually referred to as the law of the offerings.

The 5 offerings are first the burnt offering, then the meal offering, third the peace offering, fourth the sin offering and fifth the trespass offering. The first three are often called the sweet savour offerings and the last two the non-sweet savour offerings, dealing as they do with sin and trespass. All the offerings were primarily for God, in the way and in the sequence which He instructed. The idea was that the aroma of the offering would rise up to God and be acceptable to Him.

Now let's look at each of these offerings, remembering that our emphasis is on seeing Christ in these Old Testament offerings.

First, the burnt offering in Leviticus 1 and 6:8-13. Let's note some of the key aspects in chapter 1 regarding this first offering:

- verse 3            it had to be a male without blemish.
- verse 5            it had to be killed before God.
- verse 5            there is great emphasis on the blood.
- verse 6            it had to be flayed, that is its skin had to be removed.
- verses 7 and 8    the prominence of fire.
- verse 9            every part of the animal had to be clean.

All of these key aspects relate to the burnt offering of a bullock. From verse 10 to the end of the chapter, you can see that a sheep or goat or dove or pigeon could be chosen to be offered instead. Many of those key aspects are repeated for these other animals. So what do these key aspects tell us?

As often is the case, we need to go to the New Testament to get our answers. The longstanding couplet about the Old and New Testaments is absolutely true:

*The Old is by the New revealed;  
The New is in the Old concealed.*

In Hebrews 9:14, the writer pens the words, “the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God.” In Ephesians 5:2, Paul writes, “Christ also has loved us and has given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.” Jesus prayed to God the Father, “Nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done” - Luke 22:42. The New Testament epistles have phrases referring to Jesus such as “In Him is no sin”, He “did no sin”; He “knew no sin”.

Christ clearly is pointed forward to in the burnt offering. Christ was perfect, without blemish, both inwardly and outwardly. He was slain and His blood was shed firstly to and before God. He suffered and bore the consequences of God’s holy wrath against sin, answering the flaying and the fire of Leviticus 1.

It is important to note that the burnt offering is the very first of these offerings. Christ came first and foremost to accomplish God’s will and to glorify God through what He achieved in His death. In the burnt offering, the whole animal was offered; Christ was wholly for the will and pleasure of God. This is of such importance and delight to God and He places this sacrifice first.

Remember that the animals which could be offered for a burnt offering varied in size from a bullock, a large animal, to a much smaller dove or pigeon. Whether a believer’s appreciation of the worth of Christ is large or small, God wants us to bring that appreciation to Him in worship, because God delights in every heart-felt expression of the perfections of Christ.

Now the second of the offerings, the meal offering, is found in Leviticus 2 and 6:14-23. This is sometimes called the meat offering as in the Authorised Version of the Bible; the New International Version refers to it as the grain offering.

In verse 1 of chapter 2, this meal offering is to be composed of fine flour, oil and frankincense to which verse 13 adds that salt should be added. Verse 11 specifically states that leaven, or yeast, must not be used. There is great emphasis in the chapter on fire and burning and on baking in the oven or frying pan.

Where is Christ in all this? In Romans 12:1, Paul urged Christians to “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” Christ’s perfect life, devoted to God, is our supreme example for this. I would like to suggest that it is to this perfect, devoted life of Christ that the meal offering points forward.

The meal offering had to be of fine flour, that is with no lumps or foreign parts. Christ’s life was always perfectly consistent. Christ had no strong points – **everything** He did or said was perfect and equally strong. In Scripture, oil is often a picture of the Holy Spirit. So in the oil of verses 1 and 4, we see that Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit and anointed by the Holy Spirit. The sweetness and fragrance referred to in the frankincense of verses 1 and 2 were seen in Christ’s lovely life. Salt in verse 13 keeps things wholesome and how wholesome was Christ’s life. Leaven is always used in Scripture to speak of things that are evil. There was to be no leaven in the meal offering and there was no sin in Christ’s life.

The wonderful perfections of Christ’s life are often seen in times of pressure and that is what the fire, the oven and the frying pan would remind us of.

Can I mention, in passing, that blood was not involved in the meal offering. The meal offering was a sweet savour to God (see verses 2 and 9) and, while Christ’s life was pleasurable to God, His perfect life did not bring about redemption. It needed His blood shed at Calvary to achieve that.

We come now to the third offering, the peace offering in Leviticus 3 and in 7:11 to 34, the last of the 3 sweet savour offerings. The New International Version calls this the fellowship offering.

In the original language, peace means not only being in agreement, but also in prosperity, unity and happiness. This offering was a banquet of fellowship with some part of the offering for everyone. God’s part, the fat, came first – from chapter 3 verse 3 onward. The fat is the inward, the richest part. We benefit hugely from the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross but, in fact, the first benefit is for God – only God can appreciate fully the inward worth of Jesus and of what He did. God desires fellowship with man but only on the basis of what Jesus did.

Note also how often the blood is mentioned in this chapter. There is no peace with God without the blood of a sacrifice.

After God had His part, there was a part for the priests: the breast and right thigh (chapter 7:31 and 32). The breast speaks of the love of Jesus and it was to be waved before God. We can show to God that we appreciate the love of Christ. The thigh is important in walking and reminds us that Jesus lived here in love and we take that as our

example. Being heavier than the breast, the thigh was heaved up and down by the priest before God, again to demonstrate to God an appreciation of it. These are sometimes called wave offerings and heave offerings.

Lastly, the offerer takes the remainder of the sacrifice and shares it with others who appreciate the value of the offering.

Ephesians 2:14 says that “He (Christ Jesus) is our peace.” Colossians 1:20 says, “Having made peace through the blood of His cross.” Both these Scriptures in Ephesians 2 and Colossians 1 go on to say that Jesus, by His death on the cross, has brought about our reconciliation to God and so we have access to the Father (Ephesians 2:18) and have fellowship with the Father, with the Son and with fellow believers (1 John 1:3). All of this is through Christ and what He has done – how wonderful that we have a picture of all that in Leviticus 3.

The fourth sacrifice is the sin offering and the Scriptures are Leviticus chapter 4 and chapter 6:24-30. The first three sacrifices speak particularly of the inward perfections of Christ but here He takes on the sin of others and so this is the first of the two non sweet savour offerings.

The Bible makes it clear that God can't have anything to do with sin. It is abhorrent to His holy nature. “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). So the bullock in Leviticus 4:12 had to be burnt outside the camp, well away from the Holy Place which represented God's presence. Any sin is an act against God's holy nature and so the sin offering covered sins of ignorance, see verse 2.

What a solemn and amazing thing it is to read in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that “God has made Him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin.” Jesus was the only person ever to have lived on this earth who never sinned in anything that He did or said or thought. When He died for our sin, He had to go into the distance away from the holy God and so He called from the cross, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” But how necessary it was because it was only through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus that a holy God could forgive sinners and still be righteous. It is to Christ that Leviticus chapter 4 pointed forward. Little wonder that twice in our verses in chapter 6 it says of this offering that “it is most holy.”

It is interesting to note the order of the offerings for sin in chapter 4, first for the priest a bullock, then for a ruler a male goat kid, then for an ordinary person a female goat kid or lamb. Taking on responsibilities for God demands an increased sense of sin and the value of Christ's offering for it. The priests needed to offer a sacrifice for their own sin, unlike Christ who died for the sin of others. The priests had to keep on offering these sacrifices for sin, whereas Jesus died for sin once. Hebrews 10:12 says. “This Man... offered one sacrifice for sins.”

The fifth offering is the trespass offering in Leviticus 5 and 6:1-7 and 7:1-7. This is the second of the non sweet savour offerings.

There are both similarities and differences between the sin and trespass offerings. Perhaps the differences can best be summarised by looking on the sin offering as dealing with my nature, the root cause of the problem, whereas the trespass offering deals with what flows out from my nature in wrong deeds, words or thoughts. These offences are first of all against God and infringe His rights as seen in chapter 5, but then they can go on to cause problems and injury to other people, as is clearly described in the first few verses of chapter 6. Trespass is a form of sin and any sin causes hurt. In order to make restoration to God and to those people who had been wronged, the one trespassing had to add 20% to the offering and to the restitution – see chapter 5:16 and chapter 6:5.

In seeing Christ in this trespass offering shall we just let Scripture speak for itself?

- Romans chapter 4:25: “[Christ] was delivered for our offences” (the same word in the original as ‘trespasses’).
- 2 Corinthians 5:19: “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.”
- And on the matter of restoration, Psalm 69:4: “Then I restored that which I took not away.”

Just in passing, you will see that the order of the offerings differs slightly in the first 5 chapters of Leviticus compared with the law of the offerings in chapters 6 and 7, where the peace offering comes last. This is because the law of the offerings is looking at things from man's side, not God's side, and with man, sin and trespass have to be cleared before there is any thought of peace.

Time doesn't allow us to consider much else but we ought to note that there are two other offerings in the Old Testament.

One is the drink offering which occurs most frequently in Numbers, particularly chapter 15:1-13, but also in other Old Testament books. This was a mix of oil and wine and was not drunk but poured out at the time the burnt offering or

meal offering was made. In the Bible, wine speaks of joy and so the drink offering would tell us of our joy and indeed God's joy as we contemplate the value of the obedient death and the wonder of the perfect life of Jesus.

The other offering is that of the red heifer. This is recorded in Numbers chapter 19 at the time when the Children of Israel had left Mount Sinai and had resumed their journey through the wilderness towards the Promised Land. The book of Numbers is all about the walk and service of God's people, redemption having been pictured in the events recorded earlier in the first half of Exodus. In their journeyings, God's people failed frequently, so damaging their relationship with God. The purpose of the offering of the red heifer was to restore that relationship.

In a Christian's walk, failure occurs and there is defilement from the world around. These things don't put at risk our eternal salvation but they can damage the joy of our relationship with God our Father. Thus the value of 1 John 1:9 comes in: "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." That forgiveness and cleansing is based on the eternal value of the work of Christ at Calvary.

The Old Testament offerings contained God's instructions as to how His earthly people should approach Him and worship Him at that time. Christians are God's heavenly people and our worship now is a spiritual and not a physical matter, as it was then. They didn't then have the Holy Spirit permanently living in them. The Holy Spirit does dwell permanently in born again Christians today and God's desire is that we now offer our worship to Him as Father in Spirit and in truth, John 4:23 and 24. The Bible teaches that every Christian is a priest and has access to God to make that sacrifice of praise. Just as in the offerings in Leviticus there was a portion identified as being for the priest, so, even though this is not the prime objective, the Christian always gains from offering to God.

So, there are many general lessons that we can learn from these Old Testament offerings and truly all Scripture is profitable, 2 Timothy 3:16. But I believe that the over-riding lesson is that in our spiritual offerings to God, Christ comes first. Christ and His work are the basis of God's pleasure and our blessing. In our worship of God, He wants to see us make much of Christ.

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