

A Sacrificial Savior

Leviticus 1:1-7:38, Hebrews 10:1-14

Slide 1

Have you ever found yourself in a place where you felt completely out of place? Maybe you've walked into an event, and you were way underdressed, or visited a culture where everything felt foreign.

You tend to get an unsettling feeling that you don't belong; that you aren't prepared to be where you are.

Now, imagine standing at the foot of Mount Sinai with the people of Israel. Just a few months ago, they had been slaves in Egypt.

Then God miraculously delivered them, split the Red Sea in two, and brought them into a covenant relationship with Himself, giving them His Law and declaring them His people.

But there was a problem. Even though they had been rescued, they were still sinful. Their rebellion had already been on full display. They had turned to a golden calf while Moses was on the mountain, grumbling against God's provision.

They may have left Egypt, but Egypt had not yet left them, and yet, God had come near. His presence descended on the tabernacle, the place where He would dwell among them.

But at the end of Exodus, there's this striking moment where Moses, the leader of Israel, couldn't even enter the tent of meeting because of God's holiness.

Exodus 40:35, *"Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."*

It's this event that leaves us with a question. One that isn't just for Israel, but for all of us, *"How can sinful people dwell with a holy God?"*

That's the question Leviticus answers. If we're honest, Leviticus is a book that many of us struggle to read. It's full of sacrifices, purity laws, and rituals that can seem foreign.

In fact, if you've ever started a Bible reading plan in January, you'll hit Leviticus around February and that's where a lot of those plans come to die.

But at its core, Leviticus is about something we desperately need to understand, and that is that God is holy, and we're not. If we were ever to live in His presence, something had to be done about our sin.

The book of Leviticus is God's answer to that dilemma. Through the sacrificial system, the role of the priests, and the call to holiness, God made a way for His people to be near Him.

Yet, as we'll see, every sacrifice, every offering, and every act of purification was ultimately pointing forward to something greater.

The blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin. They were just a shadow; a picture of the perfect sacrifice to come, and that's where we're going today.

This series in Leviticus is going to look at the sacrificial system and how it reveals The Price, The Picture, and The Perfection of the cost of our sin.

It shows us the foreshadowing of redemption, and the ultimate fulfillment in Jesus.

In the end, we'll learn that Leviticus isn't just about Israel; it's about us, and here's the core truth for us today: Jesus is the perfect sacrifice, securing redemption once and for all.

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Leviticus opens with a problem that we can't ignore—our sin separates us from God. The very first words of the book say, *"Then the Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting."*

Now, highlight the distance between sinful humanity and a holy God. God's inside the tent, but Moses, Israel's leader, is on the outside. Something must be done if God's people are to dwell in His presence.

Therefore, immediately God establishes the sacrificial system; a system that confronts Israel, and us, with the weight of our sin.

This is where Leviticus begins, not with pleasantries or suggestions, but with the unavoidable reality that sin has a cost. If sinful people are to approach a holy God, something—or rather, someone—must bear that cost.

Which brings us to our first truth for today: sin demands payment.

Leviticus 1:1-4, *"The Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting. He said, 'Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When anyone among you brings an offering to the Lord, bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock. 'If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, you are to offer a male without defect. You must present it at the entrance to the tent of meeting so that it will be acceptable to the Lord. You are to lay your hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on your behalf to make atonement for you.'"*

Now, turn to Hebrews 10:1-4: *“The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”*

The sacrificial system of the Old Testament was not just a religious tradition; it was a divine declaration: sin demands payment. God’s holiness requires atonement, and that atonement is costly.

The people of Israel were constantly confronted with a sobering reality: sin is not a small mistake or a bad habit. It’s rebellion against the very nature and character of God, and it carries the highest price.

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From the very beginning, Scripture makes it clear that sin results in death. In the garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, death entered the world.

Romans 5:12, *“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.”*

But the first physical death recorded in Scripture wasn’t theirs; it was an innocent animal, slain by God to cover their shame. From that moment forward, sacrifice became the means by which sin was atoned.

Leviticus begins with the burnt offering, the foundational sacrifice that set the tone for the entire system.

An unblemished animal was to be brought before the Lord, and the worshiper would lay his hands on its head, symbolizing the transfer of guilt.

Then, in a deeply personal and graphic act, the animal was slaughtered, and its blood was drained at the altar.

This was not a distant or impersonal ritual. The worshiper had to watch as the cost of their sin was paid in blood.

Hebrews 9:22 makes this truth unmistakable: *"In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."*

Blood represented life. Leviticus 17:11, *"For the life of a creature is in the blood,"* and sin demanded life in return. This truth is echoed in Romans 6:23: *"The wages of sin is death."*

The people of Israel saw this reality unfold daily as the altar ran red with the price of their disobedience, but even with all these sacrifices, something was missing.

Year after year, the blood of bulls and goats flowed, yet the problem of sin remained. The cost was being acknowledged, but the debt was never fully paid.

Slide 4 The Limits of the Law

Though the sacrificial system emphasized the seriousness of sin, it was never intended to be the final solution. The Law could reveal sin, but it could never remove it.

Hebrews 10:1 makes this clear: *"The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship."*

The very repetition of sacrifices proved their insufficiency. The Day of Atonement came every year, burnt offerings were brought daily, and priests stood constantly at the altar.

If these sacrifices truly removed sin, why did they have to keep offering them? Even the priests themselves were part of the problem since they were also sinners.

Hebrew 7:27, *“Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.”*

The priests had to offer sacrifices for their own sins before they could intercede for the people. No human priest, no earthly offering could permanently solve the problem of sin.

Sacrifices were never the final answer. They were a shadow, pointing to something, or rather, someone greater. They exposed the need for a better priest, a perfect sacrifice, and a final atonement.

The sacrificial system was never meant to be the end. It was a picture. Every lamb, every drop of blood, every burnt offering were a shadow of what was to come, something far greater.

All these sacrifices were just a temporary covering that anticipated the full and final atonement, which leads us to our next truth: The Picture of Redemption.

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The picture of redemption reveals the grace of God; how He provided a way for sinners to be restored.

The sacrificial system was never meant to be the final solution. It was a picture, a preview, a foreshadowing of something much greater.

In fact, every sacrifice in Leviticus pointed forward to Jesus. Each offering revealed a different aspect of His work.

In the first 7 chapters of Leviticus we find 5 different types of offerings:

- The Burnt Offering in Leviticus 1 and 6 showed total surrender because the sacrifice was completely consumed on the altar.

It represented complete devotion to God. Jesus fulfilled this when He willingly laid down His life in perfect obedience.

- The Grain Offering in Leviticus 2 was an offering of flour, oil, and frankincense. This offering was just an act of worship as there was no blood, no atonement.

It symbolized a life fully given to God. Jesus lived the only truly sinless, perfect life, offering Himself fully.

- The Peace Offering in Leviticus 3 was about fellowship and reconciliation with God. Romans 5:1, *"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* Jesus is our peace offering!
- The Sin Offering in Leviticus 4 was for unintentional sins; sins committed in ignorance. It reminds us that sin isn't just about what we knowingly do wrong.

We sin even when we don't realize it! Jesus became the sin offering, bearing our guilt on the cross.

- The Guilt Offering in Leviticus 5 and 7 was about restitution, about making things right. Sin creates a debt, and that debt must be paid. Jesus was our guilt offering, fully satisfying the justice of God.

All of these sacrifices, all of these offerings, described for us in these first seven chapters of Leviticus were foreshadowing the one perfect sacrifice that was to come.

Year after year, the people of Israel brought their offerings, but none of them could remove their sin. They were merely placeholders, reminders that something greater was coming.

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So, why did God command all of this? Was He just giving them busywork? Was it just about religious ritual? No! The entire system was designed to prepare them for the coming of Christ.

Paul tells us in Colossians 2:17 that *“These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”*

Everything about the tabernacle, the priesthood, the sacrifices pointed to Jesus. Hebrews 9:24-26 makes it plain: Christ didn’t enter an earthly temple; He entered the true, heavenly one.

He didn’t bring the blood of bulls and goats; He offered Himself, and unlike the sacrifices that had to be offered year after year, His sacrifice was once for all. A final, perfect atonement.

The sacrificial system was never about the animals. It was about pointing people to their need for a greater sacrifice. The blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin, but the blood of Jesus could.

Now we come to the culmination of it all these sacrifices, the perfection of Christ’s sacrifice.

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Hebrews 10:5-7, *“Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: ‘Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased.*

Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, my God.'"

Did you understand what is being said here? After saying, *"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased."*

He said, *"Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, my God."*

Jesus takes away the first in order to establish the second. We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Priest daily ministered and offered, time after time, the same sacrifices, which could never take away sins.

But Jesus, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies are made into a footstool for His feet.

By one offering He perfected for all time those who are sanctified. Jesus didn't come to continue the old system; nor did He come to abolish it. Jesus came to fulfill it.

His death on the cross was not just another sacrifice added to the pile. It was the sacrifice that made all others obsolete. In Him, the entire purpose of the sacrificial system reached its fulfillment.

The sacrifices of the Old Testament were never-ending. Day after day, year after year the priests stood at the altar, offering animals that could never truly take away sin, but then Jesus came.

Look again at Hebrews 10:10: *"And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."*

Did you catch that? Once...*For all.* No more animals. No more altars. No more sacrifices.

The contrast in Hebrews 10:11-12 is striking: *"Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God."*

Do you see the difference? The priests stood because their work was never done. Jesus sat down because His work was finished. The cross was not a temporary fix; it was the final solution.

That means we don't have to keep trying to earn God's favor. We don't have to add to what Jesus has already done. His sacrifice is complete.

It's not Jesus plus our good works. It's not Jesus plus religious rituals. It's not Jesus plus legalism. It's Jesus alone.

Paul makes this clear in Galatians 2:21: *"I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"*

If we could make ourselves right with God through our own efforts, then why did Jesus have to die?

The answer is, "We can't." Only Christ's perfect sacrifice can cleanse us, and praise God, it was offered once for all.

But here's what makes Jesus' sacrifice different from all the others: He wasn't just the offering—He was also the High Priest who made the offering.

Hebrews 9:11-12, *"But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption."*

Under the old system, priests would take the blood of an animal and present it before God. But Jesus, our great High Priest, brought His own blood. The sacrifice wasn't a lamb or a goat—it was Himself. Christ is our Sacrificial Savior!

That's why John the Baptist declared in John 1:29, *"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

That's why Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:18-19: *"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."*

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Conclusion

If you want proof that His sacrifice was accepted, then reflect on last Sunday. Easter, the resurrection.

If Jesus had stayed in the tomb, then His death would've been no different from any other, but He rose again, proving that the payment was complete!

And now? He intercedes for us as our High Priest. Hebrews 7:25, *"Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them."*

Right now, at this very moment, Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, speaking on our behalf. His work on the cross was once for all, but His ministry as our High Priest continues forever.

So, what does this all mean? It means that Jesus is the perfect sacrifice, securing redemption for us once and for all.

It means we no longer have to rely on temporary solutions. The price of sin has been paid. The picture of redemption has been fulfilled. The perfect sacrifice has been offered.

The only question left is, “*Have you received it?*” Has this sacrifice been applied to your life? Have you trusted in the finished work of Christ?

Because there is no other way. The blood of animals could never take away sin. Our own efforts will never be enough. But Jesus? He is enough. Once for all.