



## Leviticus 1:1-17

# The Whole Burnt Offering

Five principal sacrifices and offerings were essential to the Tabernacle and Temple worship.

The tribe of Levi was set apart as priests and officers of the state. Those who were not descendents of Aaron assisted the priests, guarded the Tabernacle, and moved it about the wilderness. There were choirs in King David's time and instructors of the people. Tithes supported the Tabernacle and Temple, the Levites and the poor.

The Jewish religion absolutely forbids human sacrifices. Normally the animal sacrifices were made in the front of the Tabernacle or Temple. The bloody sacrifices were from the animal kingdom and were without blemish and not less than eight days old and not older than three years of age.

The worshiper legally purified himself, and brought to the priest the animal with which he had identified himself and his sins by laying his hands on its head (Leviticus 1:4). The word for "to lay the hands on" has the idea of leaning or resting by supporting oneself on the animal. The worshiper was symbolically identifying himself with the animal as his substitute by pressing heavily on it with his hands. The worshiper was personally involved in the slaying, skinning and preparing the sacrifice. The priest performed the rituals in the sacrifice.

The Burnt Offering (Leviticus 1:3-17), *olah* is "that which goes up," and is probably referring to the smoke of the totally consumed sacrifice going up to God. It consisted of a male animal of cattle, sheep or fowl and was entirely consumed, except for the hide, by the altar fire. The skin was given to the priest and the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled around the altar. This daily offering was made for the nation and for individuals to secure atonement (v. 4). A guilt or sin offering often preceded it.

The central idea of the burnt offering was entire consecration to God since the fire consumed the animal. It symbolized self-surrender of the whole person to the Yahweh. Because of personal sin, it was necessary for the individual to die spiritually. There was no reservation since the sacrifice was yielded to the LORD on behalf of the individual.

Jesus Christ came to do the will of His father. What greater demonstration of that fact can we find than in the totally consumed offering of Himself on the cross? Jesus said, "I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 6:38). He came to bring to completion that work (4:34). He was completely dedicated to the will of

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completion that work (4:34). He was completely dedicated to the will of God. He prayed, "Not my will; Thy will be done." It totally consumed Him. He set His face toward the cross and did not waver. It was all or nothing.

All of the animal sacrifices pointed to the death of Christ. Christ our consecration was wholly consumed on the altar by the fiery judgment of God. He was totally consumed by the will of God in order to obtain our justification.

Hebrews chapter ten places the emphasis on the one sufficient sacrifice of Christ to atone for sin.

By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:10-12).

This was a once-for-all sacrifice, never to be repeated like the animal sacrifices that could only point to and teach about the coming of the perfect sacrifice for sin. They couldn't make any one perfect in the sight of God (10:1-3). Every sacrifice was a constant reminder of the sins of the people. "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (v. 4). However, "for by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (v. 14).

Jesus Christ came and paid our sin debt in full. Every believer is covered by His sacrifice.

Not only do we have a perfect sacrifice in the Lamb of God, but we also have a perfect High Priest "who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, but because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself" (9:27).

Christ did not offer His perfect sacrifice in the Temple made with hands, "but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. . . . How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (9:12, 14).

There was no reservation on the part of Christ. There was complete yieldedness to the will of the Father on our behalf. As the writer of Hebrews makes very clear, His perfect sacrifice makes it possible for the believer to consecrate himself as a living sacrifice to God. We now belong to Him. He purchased us. "For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:20). We now become living sacrifices. Because of Christ's sacrifice we can now be what God originally intended us to be. We can live to righteousness. Paul expressed it this way:

Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice,

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Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:1-2).

He changes us from the inside out. Now that we have a righteous standing before God we are to live righteous lives before Him. Paul uses a technical term for offering a Levitical sacrifice. Our whole person becomes a sacrifice of worship through our daily experiences. Let us make a once-for-all presentation by placing our bodies at the disposal of God. We can now be a holy, living sacrifice that is well pleasing to Him. Our sacrifice is living in contrast to the slain sacrifices in the Temple. Paul admonishes us to "walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma" (Ephesians 5:2). Now that I have been redeemed my whole life is worship. It is now my lifestyle. This transforms the way we view our lives and God's purpose for us on this earth. Our lives can now be a "fragrant aroma" to God rather than the stench of sin and death. Let the sweet fragrance of Jesus rub off on you. We, too, can now be consumed by the will of God. We have become a whole burnt offering to God.

The desire of the believer in Christ is, "Not my will, but thy will be done." God's grace transforms us from selfishness to a lifestyle that is consecrated to God. We yield to Him as the Lord and Master of our lives. In that submission to the will of God we find joy, peace and abundant life. A living sacrifice produces the fruit of the Spirit in the believer's daily life.

If you have never done so will you make that once-and-for-all commitment of yourself to Jesus Christ right now?

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Wil is a graduate of William Carey University, B. A.; New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Th. M.; and Azusa Pacific University, M. A. He has pastored in Panama, Ecuador and the U. S, and served for over 20 years as missionary in Ecuador and Honduras. He had a daily expository Bible teaching ministry head in over 100 countries for ten years. He continues to seek opportunities to be personally involved in world missions. Wil and his wife Ann have three grown daughters. He currently serves as a Baptist pastor and teaches seminary extension courses in Honduras.

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