

The Most Boring Sermon Ever – Jesus and the Burnt Offering

Sunday Morning – 07 April 2018
Sleater Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA

1. INTRODUCTION:

- Leviticus isn't all about sacrifices; it covers the ceremonial, moral and civil laws:
 - o (1) Moral = laws that tell you right and wrong; not exhaustively, but comprehensively
 - o (2) Civil = laws that tell God's people, in that specific cultural context, how He wanted them to order and govern their society (i.e. God's kingdom-in-waiting) while they waited for the promised Messiah
 - o (3) Ceremonial = laws that told God's people how they could maintain a right relationship with him (i.e. sacrifices for atonement, fellowship, ceremonial purity, etc.)
- There are four different types of sins (i.e. different contexts), and three of them can be atoned for:
 - o (1) Unintentional sins (Lev 4-5)
 - o (2) Deliberate, repentant sins (Lev 6:1-7)
 - o (3) High-handed, unrepentant sins (Num 15:30-36); no atonement is possible as long as there is no repentance
 - o (4) General sinfulness (Lev 1); this atones for sin in a general sense and maintains fellowship with God
- This passage is about the burnt offering, which was the most common OT sacrifice:¹
 - o (1) Any violation of God's law (accidental, unintentional, deliberate, even general sinfulness) deserves punishment
 - The greater the crime = the greater the punishment
 - Crime against God = the greatest punishment possible = eternal hell
 - o (2) This is bad!
 - But, because God loves His people, He built a system in place for people to atone for their sins and keep things right
 - **Metaphor = a reoccurring "shower of righteousness"**

¹ "The burnt offering was the commonest of all the OT sacrifices," (Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, in NICOT [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979; Kindle ed.], KL 801-802). R. Laird Harris disagrees, but I believe his objections are weak (*Leviticus*, in EBC, vol. 2 [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990], 538).

The Most Boring Sermon Ever – Jesus and the Burnt Offering

Sunday Morning – 07 April 2018

Sleater Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA

- A normal person in the West showers every day or so, and if he doesn't, it's his own fault – the shower and soap are there = no fellowship for you!
- Likewise, if an OC believer didn't regularly² bring a burnt offering to “wash himself clean” of sinfulness in a general sense, to maintain fellowship with God = he's “dirty” with sin = no fellowship with God for him!
- (4) Purpose of burnt offering:
 - It atones for sinfulness in a generic, general sense, and maintains fellowship between the believer and God³
- (5) Object lesson:
 - You deserve to die for your sin (no matter what it is)
 - An animal can die in your place, to square things away
 - Consider the object lessons here:
 - The animal dies, instead of you = substitution
 - You're responsible for killing the animal yourself = personalizes the concept of **penal** substitution
 - Sacrifices hurt to give up = sin costs something
 - Lots of animals die for you over the course of your life = you're a very sinful person
- (6) Sacrifices aren't a magic bullet – they require a repentant heart
 - God's people will want to offer sacrifices to Him
 - It will be habitual event, not a special occasion
 - They're not a magic bullet or a “Get Out of Jail Free” card
 - It isn't the external act itself that pleases God, but the sincerity and motivation behind the action
 - Sacrifice was and is not a mercenary thing – we follow God's law because we love Him

² The Book of Leviticus doesn't say how often a believer should bring a burnt offering. We should assume it was fairly regularly, but economic considerations mean it was probably less often than a devout person would have preferred. Of course, this is why God introduced the sliding scale of sacrifices, depending on income level. Then, of course, you have to content with the issue of distance from the temple which was (eventually) in Jerusalem. There are many unanswered questions about the practical aspects of this system, but we can be sure the burnt offering was intended to be done regularly.

³ “Thus the burnt offering does not remove sin or change man's sinful nature, but it makes fellowship between sinful man and a holy God possible. It propitiates God's wrath against sin,” (Wenham, *Leviticus*, KL 716 – 717).

The Most Boring Sermon Ever – Jesus and the Burnt Offering

Sunday Morning – 07 April 2018

Sleater Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA

- The steps which lead to a believer being forgiven have always been the same:
 - Honest confession
 - Honest desire to forsake the sin
 - Honest prayer for forgiveness
- The only component which has changed in the NC is that we don't bring a sacrifice to atone for the sin – Christ has done that, now

2. THE BURNT OFFERING:

a. Something for everyone:

The LORD called Moses, and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, “Speak to the people of Israel, and say to them, When any man of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of cattle from the herd or from the flock (Lev 1:1-2).

- There's a progression from:
 - (1) herd, i.e. cattle (cf. 1:3f)
 - (2) to flock, i.e. sheep or goat (cf. 1:10f),
 - (3) to bird, turtledove or pigeon (cf. 1:14f)
 - and it's all according to income (cf. 1:2)⁴
- The point is that *anyone*, no matter:
 - (1) who he is,
 - (2) where he came from,
 - (3) how much money had (or didn't have),
 - (4) who his parents were,
 - (5) how much land he had (or didn't have),
 - (6) how high and lofty his job was (or wasn't),
- ... *anybody* could come to the Lord to:
 - (1) atone for sinfulness,

⁴ Mark Rooker wrote, “The order of the animals listed in chap. 1—herd, flock, birds—thus indicates a gradation in value. That is, the type of sacrifice presented would correspond to the donor's ability and resources. The Israelite of some means would offer a bull (1:3–5), the Israelite of average means would offer a sheep (1:10), while the poor would offer a bird (1:14). Hence, there is no indication that God desires to deprive his worshippers,” (*Leviticus*, vol. 3A, in NAC [Nashville, TN: B&H, 2000], 86).

The Most Boring Sermon Ever – Jesus and the Burnt Offering

Sunday Morning – 07 April 2018

Sleater Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA

- (2) maintain fellowship,
- (3) and maintain a right relationship with the Lord
- To return to the shower metaphor:
 - Everyone had access to a divine shower that would wash their sinfulness away ... until they became dirty and had to come back again!
 - There was no excuse
- I'm going to just use the description of the ritual involving the herd; it's representative of the rest
 - As we begin, its important you realize these ceremonial laws are object lessons pointing to something bigger

b. a male without blemish:

If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish (Lev 1:3).

- **Why did the animal have to be without blemish?**
 - Because the substitute for your sin had to be perfect
 - The sacrifice has to cost you something; *it's meant to hurt your checkbook*;⁵ this is why (a) Jesus was so enraged at the commercialism in the temple courtyards, (b) and why Malachi railed so much against the priests in his day
 - If the sacrifice isn't the natural outgrowth of genuine repentance for sin, and a sincere offering for God, then it's useless to Him
 - Consider the impact it would have on your mind if an expensive and valuable cow from your herd is killed, slaughtered, and goes up in smoke on an alter for your sin, while you watch!⁶
 - Think of the object lesson inherent in that scene, as you stand there:
 - (a) drenched with blood from your own animal,
 - (b) whose throat you just cut,
 - (c) who just died in your place for your sins,

⁵ "Worship that is pleasing to God must cost the offerer something," (Rooker, *Leviticus*, 93).

⁶ "In the overfed West we can easily fail to realize what was involved in offering an unblemished animal in sacrifice. Meat was a rare luxury in OT times for all but the very rich (cf. Nathan's parable, 2 Sam. 12:1-6). Yet even we might blanch if we saw a whole lamb or bull go up in smoke as a burnt offering. How much greater pangs must a poor Israelite have felt," (Wenham, *Leviticus*, KL 649-651).

The Most Boring Sermon Ever – Jesus and the Burnt Offering

Sunday Morning – 07 April 2018

Sleater Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA

- (d) whose blood the priest collected and sprinkled against the alter,
 - (e) who you chopped to pieces,
 - (f) whose body pieces are now roasting in a fire as an atoning sacrifice to God!
- **Connect the dots in your mind; what's the parallel with Christ?**
- He's the sacrifice who the Father sent to atone for our sins, and He's without blemish, too
 - **"You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot,"** (1 Pet 1:18-19).
 - Jesus' willing sacrifice cost God something, too – it was the most costly sacrifice of all!⁷

c. at the door of the tent of meeting:

he shall offer it at the door of the tent of meeting (Lev 1:3)

- This is the outer courtyard, just outside the entrance to the tabernacle⁸
- There's likely some conversation going on here, because the believer has to tell the priest what on earth he's there for!
 - This takes place just outside God's earthly "throne room," in His presence – the cloud of glory resided inside the inner compartment

d. that he may be accepted before the Lord:

that he may be accepted before the LORD (Lev 1:3)

⁷ "On Calvary Jesus paid the highest price possible in laying down his life for human sin (John 15:13). This great sacrifice is equated with the maximum extent of God's love for fallen man, and also with an individual's care and regard for his fellows," (R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus*, vol. 3, TOTC [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980], 47).

⁸ Wenham (*Leviticus*, KL 661). Likewise, Harrison wrote, "It seems best to use the term 'tent of meeting' for the place of divine revelation to Moses and the high priest, and 'tabernacle' for the entire area surrounded by the curtained walls," (*Leviticus*, 44).

The Most Boring Sermon Ever – Jesus and the Burnt Offering

Sunday Morning – 07 April 2018
Sleater Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA

- **Why does a person have to do this in order to “be accepted” by God?**
 - Sinfulness in general (not just a deliberate or unintentional sin, but just *sinfulness* in a generic sense) separates us from God
 - The sacrificial system (in all its flavors) provided believers a way to:⁹
 - (a) be forgiven,
 - (b) have their sins atoned for by way of a substitutionary sacrifice,
 - (c) maintain peace with God,
 - (d) and to be “accepted before the Lord”
 - Just as:
 - (a) a shower to wash dirt off your body on a regular basis will help insure you’re “accepted before your spouse” ...
 - (b) burnt offerings do the same for your relationship to the Lord
 - (c) you might not have gone and deliberately or accidentally rolled around in a mudpit, but after two days (or so) you’re dirty in a general sense and you need a shower – it’s an unavoidable part of life!
 - (d) sinfulness is the same way, and the burnt offering “washes” you clean and maintains your relationship with God

e. transfer of sin

he shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him (Lev 1:4).

- **Why does the believer lay his head on the head of the animal?**
 - Remember, this entire ritual is an object lesson pointing to something bigger; something we can look back at now and connect the dots to.
 - This action does two things:
 - (1) it teaches a transfer of sins:

⁹ “The idea that man is always in danger of angering God runs through the whole Pentateuch. Fierce judgments and sudden death stud its pages. Sacrifice is the appointed means whereby peaceful coexistence between a holy God and sinful man becomes a possibility,” (Wenham, *Leviticus*, KL 706 – 708).

The Most Boring Sermon Ever – Jesus and the Burnt Offering

Sunday Morning – 07 April 2018

Sleater Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA

- You deserve to die because for your sinfulness
- But, God has made a way for this animal to die in your place, as your substitute, for your sins
- So, this ritual is meant to teach that your sins, the ones you deserve to die for, are being transferred onto this animal, instead
- **(2)** it teaches substitutionary atonement:¹⁰
 - This object lesson is about substitutionary atonement; this animal dies for you, in your place, for your sins
 - This animal will be wounded for your transgressions and bruised for your iniquities
 - This cow will suffer the chastisement that will make you whole again, and by it's stripes the Old Covenant believer will be healed ... *until he has to come back in a day or so to do it all over again!*
 - This is a key difference between the Old and New Covenants – the Old Covenant didn't permanently fix the problem; it put a band-aid on it (e.g. vacuum and shower metaphors)

f. the believer kills the sacrifice:

Then he shall kill the bull before the LORD; and Aaron's sons the priests shall present the blood, and throw the blood round about against the altar that is at the door of the tent of meeting (Lev 1:5)

- Many Christians don't realize the *offerer* kills the sacrifice, not the priest
- Consider the object lesson implications here:
 - **(1)** You pick an expensive and valuable animal from your own flock
 - **(2)** You bring it to the tabernacle with a repentant heart
 - **(3)** You present it to the priest and explain what you're there for
 - **(4)** You lean your head onto the animal, and symbolically transfer your sins to the animal

¹⁰ See especially Wenham's discussion on the ransom concept inherent in the burnt offering (*Leviticus*, KL 739ff).

The Most Boring Sermon Ever – Jesus and the Burnt Offering

Sunday Morning – 07 April 2018

Sleater Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA

- (5) You then take a knife, and cut the animal's throat yourself, getting drenched in blood as the cow bleeds out from its jugular
- (6) As you stand there, knife in hand, and watch the animal you raised and fed bleed to death and die in front of your eyes ...
 - you realize this animal died the death you deserve, in your place, as your substitute
- (7) As you stand there, drenched in warm, sticky blood, holding that knife, watching the life go out of the cow's eyes, watching as the priest collects that blood from the animal's cut throat ...
 - you realize that blood should be yours,
 - you realize God allowed that animal to die in your place for your sins,
 - and you realize that, no matter how hard you try to be holy, you'll have to come back here with *another* male bull without blemish, and do this all over again the day after tomorrow
- (8) And, you're grateful God has provided a way for His children to have atonement and forgiveness
- Through all this, I hope you realize the focus on blood – this entire process is nothing but a bloody mess!
 - It's **blood** that's sprinkled on the altar
 - It's **blood** that provides life
 - And, as the priest splashes this bowl of blood (the very life of the animal that just died for your sins) onto the altar ...
 - you realize this animal is formally being presented to God in your place, as your substitute
 - your sin has been atoned for
 - you've been made clean – for now!

g. Epilogue:

And he shall flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces; and the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay wood in order upon the fire; and Aaron's sons the priests shall lay the pieces, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire upon the altar; but its entrails and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall burn the whole on the altar, as a

The Most Boring Sermon Ever – Jesus and the Burnt Offering

Sunday Morning – 07 April 2018

Sleater Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA

burnt offering, an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD (Lev 1:6-9)

- The believer cuts the animal into pieces, and the priest takes each piece as it's butchered, and puts on the alter to be totally consumed by fire
- God is pleased with this sacrifice:
 - o (a) because of what it accomplished,
 - o (b) because of what it represents,
 - o (c) and because one of His children has just expressed love and fellowship with Him

h. Lessons learned:

Male without blemish	=	Christ is sinless and perfect (1 Pet 1:19)
Sacrifice brought to make believer accepted before the Lord	=	Christ is the perfect, unblemished sacrifice that makes us permanently accepted before Yahweh
Sins are transferred to the animal		Sins are transferred to Christ
Animal dies in believer's place, for his sins, as his substitute (temporary)	=	Christ dies in believer's place, for his sins, as his substitute (permenant)
Believer killed the animal to atone for His own sins	=	Christ <i>allowed Himself to be killed unjustly</i> , for our sins (Eph 5:2)
Blood on alter means God accepts the animal's life in place of the believer's	=	Blood on alter in heaven means God accepts Christ's life in place of the believer's

3. CONNECTING A FEW DOTS:

- I'll close by trying to quickly connect some dots, so you'll see some familiar NT passages in better context, in light of Leviticus 1:

a. John 1:29:

- Many Christians assume John the Baptist was referring to Christ as the Passover lamb here, but he could just as well have been referring to Jesus as the burnt offering who atones for sins.

b. John 3:16:

The Most Boring Sermon Ever – Jesus and the Burnt Offering

Sunday Morning – 07 April 2018

Sleater Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (Jn 3:16)

- The Apostle John is talking about Christ's sacrifice, here
- Remember the object lesson:
 - o (a) Just as it hurt the believer to take an expensive and valuable cow from his herd, and offer it as a sacrifice for his own sins
 - o (b) So it hurt God *even more* to take His only begotten Son, and offer Him up as a willing and voluntary sacrifice for our sins, not His own!
- **Read Rom 8:31-39**

c. Hebrews 8:1-7:

- **Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the sanctuary and the true tent which is set up not by man but by the Lord (Heb 8:1-2)**
 - o Object lesson = the tabernacle/temple arrangement is a crude Lego-model of the true throne room, in heaven above!
 - o The writer goes on to tell us more about this:
- **For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary; for when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain," (Heb 8:3-5)**
 - o Moses saw God's real throne room while he was on Mt. Sinai, and the tabernacle was a copy of that
 - o The entire system is an object lesson, a parable, a temporary example of a better, permanent reality to come
- **But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry which is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is**

The Most Boring Sermon Ever – Jesus and the Burnt Offering

Sunday Morning – 07 April 2018
Sleater Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA

enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second (Heb 8:6-7)

- But now, Christ has come to sweep all that away, throw those LEGOs to the ground, and institute the new and better way – the reality that object lesson was looking to all the time
- *Show pencil sketch picture to make point*

d. Hebrews 9:11-15:

- **But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption (Heb 9:11-12)**
 - Do you see the object lesson fulfilled, again?
 - The earthly tabernacle, the LEGO-model the Israelites built and maintained, has served its purpose

Animal dies for sins temporarily	=	Christ dies for sins permanently
Animal's blood is collected, sprinkled on alter for God to accept its life in place of the believers	=	Christ brings His own blood into the real throne room in heaven, and presents it to His heavenly Father to accept His life in place of all believers
Atonement is temporary for the believer	=	Atonement is permanent for the believer

- **For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb 9:13-14)**
 - The parable has been fulfilled by the reality
 - The bicycle has been replaced by a Ferrari
 - The horse and buggy has been replaced by the minivan
 - The pencil sketch has been replaced by a real photograph

The Most Boring Sermon Ever – Jesus and the Burnt Offering

Sunday Morning – 07 April 2018

Sleater Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA

- The Old Covenant has been replaced by the New and better Covenant!

e. Hebrews 9:23-28:

- **Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf (Heb 9:23-25)**
 - Now, we don't have sinful priests who stand between us and God, on our behalf, in a temporary representation of God's throne room, to perform symbolic rituals to atone for our sins
 - Now, we have the Christ (the perfect, once for all sacrifice), who has brought His own blood from His own sacrifice into the real throne room, to appear in God's presence on behalf of all who repent and believe the Gospel
- **Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the Holy Place yearly with blood not his own; for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him (Heb 9:26-28)**
 - Christ has atoned for sins perfectly
 - Christ has bought peace between sinful people and our Holy God
 - Repentance and faith in who Christ is and what He's done is the only way to perfect peace, perfect forgiveness, perfect reconciliation and permanent adoption into God's family

4. CONCLUSION:

- Call to the repent and believe in the Gospel
- **Read lyrics** from hymn "Not All the Blood of Beasts" (Isaac Watts, ca. 1709):

The Most Boring Sermon Ever – Jesus and the Burnt Offering

*Sunday Morning – 07 April 2018
Sleater Kinney Road Baptist Church, Olympia, WA*

*Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty conscience peace
Or wash away the stain.*

*But Christ, the heav'nly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.*

*My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While, like a penitent, I stand,
And there confess my sin.*

*My soul looks back to see
The burdens Thou didst bear
When hanging on the cursèd tree,
And hopes her guilt was there.*

*Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse remove;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,
And sing His bleeding love.*