

# THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS – LESSON 4

In this lesson we will finish the Sweet Savor Sacrifices (Burnt, Grain & Peace) offered by “worshippers” and get into the “Sin” offerings (Purification & Reparation) which were offered by “sinners”.<sup>1</sup>

## Sweet Savor Sacrifices (Continued)

### The Peace Offering (aka The Fellowship Offering)

#### Leviticus 3

<sup>1</sup> “If someone’s offering is a fellowship offering, and he offers an animal from the herd, whether male or female, he is to present before the Lord an animal without defect.<sup>2</sup> He is to lay his hand on the head of his offering and slaughter it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Then Aaron’s sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood against the altar on all sides.<sup>3</sup> From the fellowship offering he is to bring a sacrifice made to the Lord by fire: all the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them,<sup>4</sup> both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver, which he will remove with the kidneys.<sup>5</sup> Then Aaron’s sons are to burn it on the altar on top of the B.O. that is on the burning wood, as an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the Lord.

<sup>6</sup> “If he offers an animal from the flock as a fellowship offering to the Lord, he is to offer a male or female without defect.<sup>7</sup> If he offers a lamb, he is to present it before the Lord.<sup>8</sup> He is to lay his hand on the head of his offering and slaughter it in front of the Tent of Meeting. Then Aaron’s sons shall sprinkle its blood against the altar on all sides.<sup>9</sup> From the fellowship offering he is to bring a sacrifice made to the Lord by fire: its fat, the entire fat tail cut off close to the backbone, all the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them,<sup>10</sup> both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver, which he will remove with the kidneys.<sup>11</sup> The priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made to the Lord by fire.

<sup>12</sup> “If his offering is a goat, he is to present it before the Lord.<sup>13</sup> He is to lay his hand on its head and slaughter it in front of the Tent of Meeting. Then Aaron’s sons shall sprinkle its blood against the altar on all sides.<sup>14</sup> From what he offers he is to make this offering to the Lord by fire: all the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them,<sup>15</sup> both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver, which he will remove with the kidneys.<sup>16</sup> The priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made by fire, a pleasing aroma. All the fat is the Lord’s.

<sup>17</sup> “This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live: You must not eat any fat or any blood.’ ”

The Peace Offering, like the Burnt Offering (B.O.) and Grain Offering (G.O.), produced a “soothing aroma to the Lord. But in many other respects, it was different. It was an optional sacrifice. It could be offered as a “confession” offering, a “free-will” offering or to fulfill a vow (Lev 7:12ff). It was not a part

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<sup>1</sup> Remember, these terms are being used loosely. A “worshipper” here means someone who has no sin they, or anyone else, is aware of. They come before God as obedient servants who have clear consciences. A “sinner” is defined here as someone who has learned that they have sinned and must seek purification and atonement from that sin before they can offer the sweet savor sacrifices again.

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of the regular daily offerings in the Tabernacle (or later the Temple) where the Burnt and G.O. s were brought every morning and evening. Furthermore, the worshipper was allowed to eat part of the animal. In the B.O. the whole animal was burned (except the hide which the priests kept), and in the G.O. all but a “memorial” portion was eaten by the priest. In the Peace Offering some of the animal was burned, some was eaten by the priests and the rest was eaten by the worshipper. The Peace Offering was therefore a festival (or fellowship meal) that was eaten near the sanctuary.

## 1. The Animal

- a. For the Peace Offering the same animals were used as in the B.O.; cattle, sheep and goats and they also had to be without any defects. Unlike the B.O., birds were not allowed. Also unlike the B.O. , the Peace Offering could be male or female. The use of female animals indicates that Peace Offering was less important than the B.O. This says nothing about the “worth” of women vs men. Remember, we are talking about the symbolic meaning of animals here, not about people.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. The Ritual

- a. Done by the Worshipper
  - i. He brings his animal to the entrance of the tent of meeting, lays his hand upon its head thereby transferring his guilt to the animal.
  - ii. More than likely he also declares at this time why he is bringing the animal (confession, free-will or vow).
  - iii. Then he kills the animal and captures the blood in some type of receptacle.
  - iv. The animal is then skinned and butchered, presumably in the same way as the B.O.
- b. Done by the Priest
  - i. The priest takes the blood and splashes it over the altar.

Up until this point the sacrifice is identical to the B.O. But from here on there are some important differences.

- ii. The priest burns only the fat, the kidneys and the long lobe of the liver.
  - iii. The priest was given the breast and the right thigh as his portion.
- c. Back to the Worshipper
    - i. The ceremony is completed with the worshipper, his friends and family eating the rest of the Peace Offering is a sacred meal together. Note what Deut 12:7 says about it.

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<sup>2</sup> Galatians 3:28 puts to rest any questions about whether men and women are equal in God’s sight. Just as elders, evangelists, teachers and other Christians are all of equal value in God’s sight they do have different spiritual roles from one another. Men and women have different spiritual roles while being accorded equal value. It is these roles, ordained by God, that we must learn to respect and obey. Roles and worth are not connected spiritually.

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## Deuteronomy 12:7

7 There, in the presence of the Lord your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the Lord your God has blessed you.

3. The Purpose of, and Occasions for, the Peace Offering
  - a. ***It is likely that the reason for offering the kidneys and liver was symbolic. In the ancient world, the kidneys were referred to as the seat of emotions just as we in the West refer to the heart. (The heart in the O.T. refers more to the mind and will.) It is possible that the offering of the kidneys and internal organs symbolized the dedication of the worshippers best and deepest emotions to God.***
  - b. The Peace Offering closed with a meal at which God was present. God's presence showed that all sin had been accounted for and that there was a joyful harmony between God and the worshipper. The worshipper dedicated his sacrifice to God and then God gave some of it back, probably symbolizing the way God gives back to man/woman who keeps his law, deals with their sin, and is thankful for God's grace.
  - c. There are three different types of Peace Offering
    - i. Confession type was offered in two situations
      1. When seeking God's deliverance from enemies or sickness. In these cases, one would feel the need to confess sin since sin was often the reason for being oppressed by one's enemies or for being struck with sickness.<sup>3</sup>
      2. After being delivered one might offer a confession sacrifice that focused on God's mercy.<sup>4</sup>
    - ii. Vow type
      1. In difficult circumstances people often made a vow to the Lord that if he helped them they would do something for God in exchange. When they fulfilled their vow, they brought a Peace Offering<sup>5</sup>
    - iii. Free-Will type
      1. This was a spontaneous act of thankfulness by the worshipper to God.<sup>6</sup> It was often in response to God's unexpected and unasked for generosity. ***Interestingly enough, God allowed people to offer less than perfect animals for free-will offerings (Lev 22:23).*** But where confession of sin or fulfillment of vows were concerned, perfect animals were required.

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<sup>3</sup> See especially Judges 20:26; 21:4, 2 Sam 24:25

<sup>4</sup> See Ps 56:13f

<sup>5</sup> One of the best known vow offerings is found in 1 Sam 1 when Hannah made a vow to God that, if he would allow her to have children, she would dedicate the child to God as a Nazarite. When Samuel was born and weaned, Hannah's husband, Elkanah, brought a lavish Peace Offering of three bulls. This would seem to indicate how incredibly thankful Hannah and Elkanah were for God's gracious answer to her prayer.

<sup>6</sup> See Ex 35:29; Ezra 1:4, 8:28; Ps 54:6

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## 4. The Peace Offering and the New Testament

- a. The specific term “Peace Offering” is never used in the N.T. Paul did decide to pay for the offerings of four men with a vow, one of which would have been a Peace Offering (Acts 21:23ff).
- b. It is possible that the Lord’s supper is more closely related to the Peace Offering than any other O.T. sacrifice.<sup>7</sup> When Jesus refers to the cup of wine as the “new covenant in my blood” (1 Cor 11:25) he alludes to the blood of the old covenant. When the covenant at Mt. Sinai had been agreed to by both parties<sup>8</sup> Moses took the blood of the burnt offerings and peace offerings and threw it over the people and declared;

### Ex 24:8

**“Here is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you.”**

The Last Supper was more like a Peace Offering than a B.O. since a meal was involved where God is present. **Furthermore, the worshipper needs to be clean and pure (no impurities, no rebellious or undealt with sin) in order to eat the Lord’s supper, just as in the Peace Offering.** Compare for yourself these two verses...

### Leviticus 7:20

**20 But if anyone who is unclean eats any meat of the fellowship offering belonging to the Lord, that person must be cut off from his people.**

### 1 Corinthians 11:27-28

**27 Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.**

Here is a clear parallel to the O.T. **Divine punishment is promised for those who take the Lord’s supper in an unworthy manner. In fact, God punished the Corinthians for that very thing.**

### 1 Corinthians 11:30-32

**30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. 32 When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.**

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<sup>7</sup> It is true that the Lord’s supper was a Passover meal. But a Passover can be seen as a form of Peace Offering that was celebrated once a year by the entire nation.

<sup>8</sup> Note this very important aspect of a covenant relationship. The “contract” (covenant) must be agreed to by both parties. In modern times, this normally means signatures by both parties, but can also include earnest money (in the case of buying a home), witnesses to the signatures (in the case of a will or trust), or even a professional to notarize the documents. Only when the parties come to an agreement on terms can a covenant be ratified. That is why it is important to ensure people know what God requires of them in order to maintain a covenant relationship with him.

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God brought a form of judgment against some of those in Corinth who had taken the Lord's supper without dealing with the uncleanness of their sin. Some had become weak, some were struck with illness and some had even died as a result ("fallen asleep"). *This is strikingly similar to how God dealt with people in the O.T. who did not purify themselves of uncleanness before offering the sweet savor sacrifices.* Perhaps we should get more serious about teaching what one must do about their sin before participating in the Lord's Supper.

- c. The Bible never specifically links the Peace Offering and the Lord's Supper. But the parallels are striking. Instead of eating meat in God's presence, we consume bread and wine (or grape juice). As we drink the "fruit of the vine" we should remember the words of Leviticus...

### Leviticus 17:11

...it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

Jesus' blood, not our good deeds, is what makes atonement for our very lives. It is the only thing that saves us. We do good deeds because we are saved, not in order to be saved. The Lord's supper is a reminder of God's grace, the high cost of our salvation, and the need to keep the terms of the **blood covenant** we made with God.

### Sin Sacrifices (Those Sacrifices Offered By "Sinners")

Once a person became aware of sin they had committed they were not allowed to offer the Sweet Savor sacrifices until they had dealt with their sin. That is why you will almost always see Purification Offerings and Reparation Offerings (aka Guilt Offerings) presented before B.O., G.O. and Peace Offerings.

1. Leviticus 4 & 5 is arranged quite differently than chapters 1, 2 & 3 (the sweet savor sacrifices). Where the sweet savor sacrifices are organized around the sacrificial animal, the more valuable animals are dealt with before the less valuable. But in "sin sacrifices" of Lev 4 & 5, the value of the animal is secondary. The most important aspect of these sacrifices are twofold:
  - a. The most important distinction is between inadvertent sins, sins of omission and deliberate sins of commission (but this very limited in scope, as we shall see).
  - b. Also of utmost importance is the spiritual "status" of the sinner bringing the offering. It turns out that a leader's sin is more serious than a non-leader's sin in the eyes of God.
2. The Structure of Leviticus 4 & 5
  - a. Purification Offerings (aka Sin Offerings)
    - i. 4:1-35 for **inadvertent sin**
      - 2 – general introduction
      - 3-21 – blood sprinkled in the Holy Place
        - 3-12 – for the High Priest
        - 13-21 – for the whole congregation
      - 22-35 – blood on the main altar

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22-26 – for the tribal leader

27-31 – for an ordinary Israelite offering a goat

32-35 – for an ordinary Israelite offering a lamb

ii. 5:1-13 for **sins of omission**

1-6 – offering a lamb or goat

7-10 – offering birds

11-13 – offering flour

b. Reparation Offering (aka Guilt Offering)

i. 5:14-19 for **inadvertent sin**

14-16 – offense known

17-19 – offense known

ii. 5:20-26 for **deliberate sin**

The Purification Offering (aka The Sin Offering)

Leviticus 4:1 - 5:13

1 The Lord said to Moses, 2 “Say to the Israelites: ‘When anyone sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the Lord’s commands–

3 “ ‘If the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, he must bring to the Lord a young bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed. 4 He is to present the bull at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting before the Lord. He is to lay his hand on its head and slaughter it before the Lord. 5 Then the anointed priest shall take some of the bull’s blood and carry it into the Tent of Meeting. 6 He is to dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle some of it seven times before the Lord, in front of the curtain of the sanctuary. 7 The priest shall then put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense that is before the Lord in the Tent of Meeting. The rest of the bull’s blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 8 He shall remove all the fat from the bull of the sin offering–the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them, 9 both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver, which he will remove with the kidneys– 10 just as the fat is removed from the ox sacrificed as a fellowship offering. Then the priest shall burn them on the altar of burnt offering. 11 But the hide of the bull and all its flesh, as well as the head and legs, the inner parts and offal– 12 that is, all the rest of the bull–he must take outside the camp to a place ceremonially clean, where the ashes are thrown, and burn it in a wood fire on the ash heap.

13 “ ‘If the whole Israelite community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the Lord’s commands, even though the community is unaware of the matter, they are guilty. 14 When they become aware of the sin they committed, the assembly must bring a young bull as a sin offering and present it before the Tent of Meeting. 15 The elders of the community are to lay their hands on the bull’s head before the Lord, and the bull shall be slaughtered before the Lord. 16 Then the anointed priest is to take some of the bull’s blood into the Tent of Meeting. 17 He shall dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle it before the Lord seven times in front of the curtain. 18 He is to put some of the blood on the horns of the altar that is before the Lord in the Tent of Meeting. The rest of the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 19 He shall

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remove all the fat from it and burn it on the altar, 20 and do with this bull just as he did with the bull for the sin offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven. 21 Then he shall take the bull outside the camp and burn it as he burned the first bull. This is the sin offering for the community.

22 “ ‘When a leader sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the commands of the Lord his God, he is guilty.23 When he is made aware of the sin he committed, he must bring as his offering a male goat without defect. 24 He is to lay his hand on the goat’s head and slaughter it at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered before the Lord. It is a sin offering. 25 Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. 26 He shall burn all the fat on the altar as he burned the fat of the fellowship offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for the man’s sin, and he will be forgiven.

27 “ ‘If a member of the community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the Lord’s commands, he is guilty.28 When he is made aware of the sin he committed, he must bring as his offering for the sin he committed a female goat without defect. 29 He is to lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and slaughter it at the place of the burnt offering. 30 Then the priest is to take some of the blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. 31 He shall remove all the fat, just as the fat is removed from the fellowship offering, and the priest shall burn it on the altar as an aroma pleasing to the Lord. In this way the priest will make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven.

32 “ ‘If he brings a lamb as his sin offering, he is to bring a female without defect. 33 He is to lay his hand on its head and slaughter it for a sin offering at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered. 34 Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. 35 He shall remove all the fat, just as the fat is removed from the lamb of the fellowship offering, and the priest shall burn it on the altar on top of the offerings made to the Lord by fire. In this way the priest will make atonement for him for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven.

1 “ ‘If a person sins because he does not speak up when he hears a public charge to testify regarding something he has seen or learned about, he will be held responsible.

2 “ ‘Or if a person touches anything ceremonially unclean—whether the carcasses of unclean wild animals or of unclean livestock or of unclean creatures that move along the ground—even though he is unaware of it, he has become unclean and is guilty.

3 “ ‘Or if he touches human uncleanness—anything that would make him unclean—even though he is unaware of it, when he learns of it he will be guilty.

4 “ ‘Or if a person thoughtlessly takes an oath to do anything, whether good or evil—in any matter one might carelessly swear about—even though he is unaware of it, in any case when he learns of it he will be guilty.

5 “ ‘When anyone is guilty in any of these ways, he must confess in what way he has sinned 6 and, as a penalty for the sin he has committed, he must bring to the Lord a female lamb or goat from the flock as a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin.

7 “ ‘If he cannot afford a lamb, he is to bring two doves or two young pigeons to the Lord as a

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penalty for his sin—one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering.<sup>8</sup> He is to bring them to the priest, who shall first offer the one for the sin offering. He is to wring its head from its neck, not severing it completely, <sup>9</sup> and is to sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering against the side of the altar; the rest of the blood must be drained out at the base of the altar. It is a sin offering. <sup>10</sup> The priest shall then offer the other as a burnt offering in the prescribed way and make atonement for him for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven.

<sup>11</sup> “ ‘If, however, he cannot afford two doves or two young pigeons, he is to bring as an offering for his sin a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering. He must not put oil or incense on it, because it is a sin offering. <sup>12</sup> He is to bring it to the priest, who shall take a handful of it as a memorial portion and burn it on the altar on top of the offerings made to the Lord by fire. It is a sin offering. <sup>13</sup> In this way the priest will make atonement for him for any of these sins he has committed, and he will be forgiven. The rest of the offering will belong to the priest, as in the case of the grain offering.’ ”

1. Why Call It the “Purification Offering instead of Sin Offering”?
  - a. Most translations and commentators I have read render the Hebrew term for this sacrifice as “sin offering.” That seems to make a lot of sense since this offering dealt with the consequences of sin. But other sacrifices also atoned for sin such as the B.O., Peace Offering and the Reparation Offering. To adopt the term “sin offering” tends to obscure a very important purpose of this sacrifice. Commentators and many teachers tend to suggest that this is the one and only atoning sacrifice for sin.<sup>9</sup> It is not. There is another important function God designates for this offering.
  - b. Propitiation (appeasing) of Divine anger at sin is an important element of the B.O. Restitution, as we will see, is an important feature of the Reparation Offering. Purification is the main element of the Purification Offering.
  - c. Sin not only angers God, it also makes the Tabernacle and all its furnishings unclean. A holy God cannot dwell in the midst of the uncleanness caused by sin. The Purification Offering purifies the place of worship (the Tabernacle) so that God may be present among his people. The Hebrew word can mean to “de-sin” or to “purify”. If you keep this in mind, the rituals of blood sprinkling and what they are for will make a lot of sense.
  - d. Purification Offerings occurred far less frequently than the B.O. which occurred at least twice a day.
2. The Animals
  - a. A wider variety of animals is allowed for this sacrifice. Bulls, goats (male or female), lambs (female), doves, pigeons are all mentioned. Grain (flour) is even allowed for the very poor. It is notable that a male lamb or ram, the most common animals in the B.O., are not allowed

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<sup>9</sup> I held this view for almost 30 years because of some teaching I learned about Leviticus as a young Christian. I have recently abandoned this view which now believe it to be incorrect. Wenham’s book, “The Book of Leviticus”, generally regarded as the best commentary on the subject helped change my opinion. Much of this class, though not all, is selectively based on Wenham’s book.



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for the Purification Offering. Pigeons do not appear in Peace Offerings since they were too small for a meal but were allowed in B.O. and Purification Offerings.

- i. Male and female animals could be used in the Purification Offering, but only male animals were allowed in the B.O.
- ii. In the festivals found in Num 28-29, the B.O. required more animals of greater value than the Purification Offerings.
- iii. The fact that only males were allowed in the B.O., the frequency of which it was commanded to be offered, and the greater value of animals it required in the festivals all seems to indicate the greater position it held in worship.

### 3. The Ritual

- a. The Purification Offering begins similarly to other sacrifices. The “sinner” brought his animal to the entrance to the tent of meeting, laid his hand on its head, stated the reason he had brought the sacrifice (confessed his sin) and then killed the animal. The rest of the ritual is very different.
  - i. In the B.O. and Peace Offering, the blood was thrown against the altar. Here the blood is collected in two basins.
    1. One basin contains the blood which is poured at the front of the altar.
    2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> basin contained blood that was used in a variety of ways depending on **who the “sinner” was**.
      - a. **If it was the Priest who inadvertently sinned**, he laid his hand on the animal killed it himself. The blood had to be taken into the Holy Place and sprinkled seven times on the curtain that hung between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.<sup>10</sup> Blood was also smeared on the horns of the altar of incense.
        - i. The Priest could not eat the sacrifice. Any time the blood had to be taken into the Holy Place or the Most Holy Place, indicating the seriousness of the offense, the Priest was not allowed to eat any of the sacrifice.
        - ii. The Priest was required to offer a bull. No lesser animal was allowed. This indicates the elevated seriousness of a Priest’s sin.
          1. The kidneys, long lobe of the liver and all the fat were burned on the altar.
          2. The rest of the bull was take outside the camp to a place ceremonially clean and burned on a wood fire.
            - a. This seems to indicate that God wanted nothing to do with the rest of the animal which

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<sup>10</sup> On the annual Day of Atonement, the Priest entered the Most Holy Place and sprinkled blood on the Mercy Seat (the cover of the Ark) in order to purify it as well.

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represented sin. It wasn't fit to be offered to him.

- b. **If it was the entire community who inadvertently sinned**, the elders of the Israelites had to lay their hands on the animal and killed it themselves. Everything else is essentially the same as the offering required for the sinful Priest. A bull was required, the blood was sprinkled on the curtain and smeared on the altar of burnt offering, etc. The fact that the rituals are the same for the sinful community as for the sinful Priest indicate how serious God saw the sin in these two instances *even though the sin was inadvertent*.<sup>11</sup> The Priest could eat none of it.
  - c. **If it was a tribal leader who inadvertently sinned**, he had to offer a perfect male goat. He had to lay his hands on the goat's head, presumably confess his sin and kill the animal.
    - i. Now the blood is NOT taken into the Holy Place, but instead the Priest takes some of the blood and smears it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering (the main altar outside the Tabernacle). No blood is taken into the Holy Place. The kidneys, long lobe of the liver and all the fat were burned on the altar.
    - ii. The Priests were allowed to eat the rest.
  - d. **If it was one of the ordinary Israelites who sinned inadvertently**, he had to bring a perfect female goat or lamb for his sin. If poor, he could bring a pair of doves or pigeons. If VERY poor, he could be 1/10 of an ephah of flour which could NOT have any oil or incense added to it or brought with it.
4. The Occasions for Needing the Purification Offering
- a. For the purpose of cleansing one from uncleanness
    - i. A woman unclean as a result of childbirth (Lev 12:6).
    - ii. A person unclean as a result of a serious skin disease (14:19).
    - iii. Someone who has a bodily discharge (15:15).
    - iv. Less frequent instances
      - 1. The dedication of Priests (8:14).
      - 2. The dedication of the altar (Num 7:16).
      - 3. The dedication of the Levites (Num 8:8).
      - 4. On completion of a Nazarite vow (Num 6:14).

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<sup>11</sup> Give yourself some time and think about this point. Think about how serious sin must be to God that even inadvertent sin required such extreme measures to purify the Tabernacle.

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### b. Inadvertent Sin

- i. What exactly is inadvertent sin? It is sin that is not deliberate. It is not as a result of rebellion where one would think, “I know what the Lord (or the Word of God) says about this but I’m going to do it anyway.” That is willful, “high handed”, deliberate, rebellious sin. God did view that sin very differently. Note what is said here...

#### Numbers 15:27-31

27 “But if just one person sins unintentionally, he must bring a year-old female goat for a sin offering. 28 The priest is to make atonement before the Lord for the one who erred by sinning unintentionally, and when atonement has been made for him, he will be forgiven. 29 One and the same law applies to everyone who sins unintentionally, whether he is a native-born Israelite or an alien.

30 “But anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or alien, blasphemes the Lord, and that person must be cut off from his people. 31 Because he has despised the Lord’s word and broken his commands, that person must surely be cut off; his guilt remains on him.”

Number conveniently provides an example of deliberate sin in the very next verse.

#### Numbers 15:32-36

32 While the Israelites were in the desert, a man was found gathering wood on the Sabbath day. 33 Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole assembly, 34 and they kept him in custody, because it was not clear what should be done to him. 35 Then the Lord said to Moses, “The man must die. The whole assembly must stone him outside the camp.” 36 So the assembly took him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as the Lord commanded Moses.

If one committed premeditated murder (obviously a deliberate sin), you were given the death penalty (Num 35:16ff). If you accidentally killed someone, you were allowed to flee to one of the cities of refuge (Num 35:11) and your life would be protected.

One could be “cut off” from the community by banishment or in extreme cases, by death. ***Most deliberate sin that was a direct challenge to God’s clear command led to being cut off in one form or another.***

On the other hand, inadvertent sins are sins you didn’t mean to commit. Accidentally becoming unclean would be an example.

### c. Sins of omission (5:1-4)

- i. Generally means that someone knows he ought to do something but neglects to do so for some reason, perhaps because he/she forgot.

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1. Failing to give evidence in court.
  2. Failing to undergo ritual cleansing after becoming unclean.<sup>12</sup> It is clear that uncleanness is sin because in 5:5-6 he calls uncleanness “sin”. Uncleanness is not just some unimportant technicality in the life of an Israelite. It is sin that needs to be avoided. When one becomes unclean, repentance is necessary. Also, when someone fails to promptly cleanse themselves after becoming unclean, they transmit their uncleanness to the Tabernacle (15:31).
  3. Failing to keep a promise/oath through thoughtlessness.
5. The Purpose of the Purification Offering
- a. Although many believe the Purification Offering is THE principal sin offering, the explicit statements in Leviticus do not seem to support this. This sacrifice seems to be most connected to the purpose of purification.

### Leviticus 15:31

31 “You must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place, which is among them.”

- b. As previously mentioned, on the Day of Atonement the Mercy Seat of the Ark had to be cleansed.

### Leviticus 16:19

19 He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites.

- c. These verses show that sin not only defiles man, but God’s sanctuary. If there is no purification, death will be forthcoming. If there was no purification, God would not remain with Israel.
- d. The B.O. instead seems to be the principal sacrifice which atoned for sin. It reconciled the sinner to his God. It was the most frequent and most costly sacrifice. Only unblemished animals could be offered and the Priest was not allowed to eat the meat.
- e. In contrast, the Purification Offering was a less important rite, offered less frequently, with less valuable animals. It was designed to deal with the underlying problem sin created – pollution and defilement. Sin had aftereffects. It seems to have some of the characteristics of somethings that it spawned – diseases that can spread invisibly. Sin defiled the Tabernacle in invisible but nonetheless real ways. Sin also acts like a pollutant. It pollutes not just the person, but the area surrounding it.<sup>13</sup>
- f. ***The main purpose therefore of the Purification Offering seems to have been twofold...***
  - i. ***It converted a “sinner” back into a “worshipper” by purifying them of their sin thus allowing them to offer the Sweet Savor sacrifices.***

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<sup>12</sup> See also Lev 11:24-28, 39-40; 22:4-7

<sup>13</sup> We will expound more on this in a later lesson.

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*ii. To purify the Tabernacle so that God would remain with his people.*

*The B.O. then was probably the sacrifice that brought complete reconciliation between God and man by allowing the “worshiper” an opportunity to rededicate themselves to God and his service.*

## 6. The Purification Offering and the N.T.

- a. Keeping in mind the two main purposes of the Purification Offering, what can we learn about it in the N.T.?
- b. One cannot go through the laws concerning sacrifice found in Leviticus without concluding, as the Hebrew writer did...

### Hebrews 9:22

**22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed (purified) with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.**

Nearly EVERYTHING and EVERYONE had to be purified with blood. All of that blood symbolized Jesus' blood which purifies us from all sin and uncleanness. One can see this very clearly in many N.T. scriptures.

### Revelation 7:14

**And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

Jesus blood purified them. This is certainly the symbolic meaning of the white robes. Ironically they are made “white” by “blood”. In Levitical law it was primarily the place of worship, the Tabernacle (later, the Temple) that was purified. Where is the place of worship now? Where is the Tabernacle (Temple) now?

### 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

**16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.**

- c. We are God's Temple. Jesus sin purifies us, the Temple, so that God's Spirit may remain with us. But it does more than that! It not only purifies our bodies, it purifies our consciences!

### Hebrews 9:13-14

**13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer<sup>14</sup> sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself**

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<sup>14</sup> The Red Heifer Purification Offering is one we did not have time to cover. Its purpose was to purify those who had come into contact with a dead body, bones or a grave, making them unclean (Num 19).

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unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

- d. His death achieved a type of cleansing that animal sacrifices never could.

**Hebrews 10:11-14**

**11 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. 12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. 13 Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, 14 because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.**

- e. The Purification Offering was taken outside camp because it represented sin and rebellion against God. So was Jesus.

**Hebrews 13:11-13**

**11 The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. 12 And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. 13 Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore.**

This may also explain why God forsook Jesus while he hung on the Cross. Jesus, as THE Purification Offering had taken on the sin and rebellion of the world. That kind of offering was not burned on the altar, but disgracefully taken and burned away from God's presence. As a result, God turned away from Jesus. We are to follow Jesus outside the camp and bear the same disgrace he bore.

- f. There are many other parallels that can be drawn. God's presence, the Holy Spirit, is now indwelling the Christian. Just as undealt with sin could drive God from the O.T. Tabernacle (Temple) so willful ("high handed") sin can drive God's Spirit from the Christian (Heb 6:4ff; 10:25ff, etc.)
- g. Unintentional sin is still sin in God's eyes and must be uncovered and repented of.
- h. Confession of sin was an element of Israel's Purification Offerings. It is also a REQUIREMENT of being "healed" of sin in the N.T.

**James 5:16**

**16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.**

**1 John 1:9**

**9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

- i. There are other incredible parallels that can be drawn but we have to stop somewhere!