

Leviticus 1:3–17

God Gives Us to Ascend as Pleasing to Him by a Reconciling Substitute

Friday, July 21, 2023 ▫ Read Leviticus 1:3–17

Questions from the Scripture text: To what sort of offering does v3 refer? From where? What sex animal must be offered? Of what quality? From what motivation? Where? Before Whom? Then what does he do (va4)? What does this laying hold of the offering result in (v4b)? What does he then do to the bull (v5)? Before Whom? And who then take the blood? To do what? Where? To what? Then what does the worshiper do (v6)? Who then do what in v7? What do they do with the products of v6 (v8)? What does the worshiper do in the meantime (v9a)? So that who can do what with all of this (v9b)? What does all of this end up being, and unto Whom (v9c)? From where else may this sort of offering come (v10)? What may be offered? What new detail do v11–13 add to the procedure in v5–9? Where else can this sort of offering come (v14)? What may be offered? Who brings it (v15)? What does he do to the head? What does he do to the blood? What does he do with the crop and feathers (v16)? But what with the rest of it (v17)? What does this end up being, and unto Whom (end of v17, cf. end of v13, end of v9)?

How can a sinner come near to God and be pleasing to Him? Leviticus 1:3–17 looks forward to the evening sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these fifteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the Lord provides a substitute, consecrated by blood and transformed by fire, in which the worshiper ascends unto heaven, and by whose blood the worship on earth is consecrated as well.**

The first, and most important, brought-near thing (offering) that Yahweh commands from the within the tent of meeting is literally “an ascension.” “Burnt sacrifice” in the NKJ is translating a noun-form of the verb for “go up” or “ascend.”

Who may ascend? The wealthy (who can afford from the herd, v3–9), the ordinary (who can afford from the flock, v10–13), and the poor (who can afford only birds, v14–17). God shows no partiality (cf. Deut 10:17). The full procedure is given for the sacrifice of the bull, with appropriate alterations for the smaller sacrifices. There are several important things to note.

First, much of the passage (v3, 10, 14) emphasizes the worshiper's duty to choose. He actively identifies his substitute. He must choose one that is costly to him; it's not like the chapter is saying that someone who can afford a bull is free to “go cheap” and get a turtledove! Also, the sacrifice has to be male (where easily detected; v3, 10). This is, in part, because it will be a federal representative of sorts, but especially because it is looking forward to Christ, the blameless One Whose blood is shed and Who ascends. He must choose one that is blameless, because it will be ascending to the Lord. Only the pure may do that (cf. Ps 24:3–6; Mt 5:8; Mt 22:12–13; Heb 12:14; 2Pet 1:4; 1Jo 3:2–3). Ultimately, only Christ may do that (cf. Ps 24:7–10)! Do we give the Lord the costliest that we can? Do we give the Lord the best that we can? Do we come to Him only in our perfectly pure Savior? Are we seeking that purity in which we may follow after our ascended Savior?

Second, there is an identification with the animal. This laying is heavy enough to be translated as leaning or even pressing upon. Maybe “laying hold of.” Our point is that the physical contact is forceful, and it is “pressing” a point: the identity between the worshiper and the animal. It is not a transfer of sin (in ch. 16, when sin is transferred, the goat is driven away; the holy goat is the one that is sacrificed). The animal is the “brought near one,” so that in his identity with it, the worshiper may come near and “ascend” as the animal ascends. Indeed, if there is sin to be dealt with, one of the sacrifices detailed in ch. 4–5 will have to be offered first, before the ascension (sometimes translated “whole burnt offering” or “burnt sacrifice”) can be offered.

While the word “atonement” (v4) includes ideas of saving ransom and cleansing, its main idea is reconciliation to God, being brought near to Him, being at one with Him. At-one-ment. Here is a wonderful reality in Christ's being our ascension. We are identified with Him, so that in Him we may be at-one with God!

Third, the worshiper himself slits the throat of the bull or the goat or the sheep (in the case of the bird, the priest directly takes the blood). This is an indication of dying to self. He slaughters the animal that he has already identified with himself. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. The blood must be used to consecrate the furnishings of the tabernacle (in this case the altar itself, where the ascension will take place). But, before it can be used to do so, first it must be shed. The worshiper must be willing to do this with his own hand. Christ laid down His own life, willing to die for our sakes on account of His union and identity with us (cf. Jn 10:17–18).

Finally, the priests conduct the actual bringing near (offering)—the actual ascension (burnt sacrifice). First, they capture the blood and sprinkle it all around the altar. There are many baptizings of the tabernacle furnishings with blood: pourings, splashing, splatterings, smearings, and sprinklings. The life is in the blood (cf. 17:11–14; Gen 9:4). This is used to cleanse and consecrate the altar for use. Only then, do they arrange the wood and fire (v7), with the head and fat on top (v8), which that the worshiper has removed and given to them (v6). Meanwhile, the worshiper washes the remaining viscera and legs with water, to make sure that there is no excrement or other impurity upon them (v9a). Finally, all are burned upon the altar as an “ascension.” There are several Hebrew words for burning, and this one literally means to turn into smoke. The idea is not the consuming of the animal but the transformation of the animal into a form in which it may ascend.

The result of all of this is that as the worshiper ascends to God, identified with the cleansed and holy substitute from the altar that has been cleansed by blood, he is a “sweet aroma” to YHWH. The words “sweet” and “aroma” are actually synonyms, each carrying the meaning of both sweet and aroma. It is an emphatic doubling. If God had not been giving these commands from within the tabernacle itself, it could hardly be believed to be true: by ascending in this way, the believer is actually brought near as pleasingly pleasingly pleasing to Him Who dwells on high! Of course, this was not accomplished by this sacrifice in an inherent or ultimate sense, but because of Christ Himself. The copy/shadow (cf. Heb 8:5, 10:1) of Christ, His sacrifice, His ascension, and His heavenly ministry was given for the sake of Christ and accepted for the sake of Christ. This is the glorious, ultimate conclusion for us: as we ascend through Him, we are genuinely pleasing to God. Praise the Lord!

Since you cannot ascend to God by yourself, what do you need? How can you be cleansed? How can you be consecrated? In Whom can you be transformed? How are you received when you ascend in Him in this way?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You for providing us with Your own Son as our substitute. Thank You for cleansing us by His blood and consecrating even the assembly in glory by that blood. Now, give us to lay our hands upon Him, to be identified with Him, so that we may be received in Heaven in Him, and that we may be pleasing to You in Him, we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP73C “Yet Constantly I Am with You” or TPH73C “In Sweet Communion, Lord, with Thee”

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Leviticus chapter 1 verses 3 through 17. These are God's words. If as offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer for a male without blemish. He's offered of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before you all play. And he's up with his hand on the head of the burnt offering.

It will be accepted on his behalf to make a tournament for him. He shall kill the bull before you all day and the priests Aaron sons shall bring the blood And sprinkle the blood all round on the altar that is by the door. The tabernacle of meeting When he saw skin, the burnt to offering and cut it into its pieces.

The sons of air and the priests shall put fire on the altar and lay the wood and order on the fire. Then the priest and son shall lay the parts, the head and the fat. In order on the wood that is on the fire upon the altar, but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water.

And the priests so burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice an offering made by fire. A sweet aroma to Yahwe. It was offering is of the flocks of the sheep or of the goats. As a burnt off as a burnt sacrifice, he saw bring a mail without blemish.

He shall kill it on the north side of the altar before yahua and the priests are and sons. Shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar. And he saw cut it into its pieces with its head and its back. Then the priest shall lay them in order on the wood, that is on the fire upon the altar.

But he saw wash the entrails and the legs with water. Then the priests shall bring it all and burn it on the altar. It as a burnt sacrifice. And offering made by fire a sweet aroma to yahua And if the burnt sacrifice of his offering to Yahweh is a birds, Then he saw bring his offering of turtle doves, her young pigeons.

The priest shall bring it to the altar ring off its head and burn it on the altar. It's blood shall be drained at the outside at the side of the altar. And he shall remove its crop with its feathers and cast it beside the altar of the east side into the place for the ashes, then he shall split it at its wings.

But shall not divide it completely and the priests shall burning on the altar. On the wood that is on the fire. And as a burnt sacrifice and offering made by fire. A sweet aroma. To your way. So far the reading of gods inspired and inherent word. And, Almost immediately, we find out.

That by gods speaking to, man. To enable him to come near. The the god is. Picturing, not just a coming near to the tabernacle. But an actual coming near to god himself. Because the first, The first brought near thing that he describes remember. The word offering is usually or often translating.

Uh, A noun from the verb for bringing near the first brought near thing is an ascension. For whatever reason, probably going. Back to, at least, James, the six of Scotland, James. The first of England's, authorized version. Um, Was being translated, burnt sacrifice here. But it really is just the word for going up or the thing that goes up, it is ascension.

And so, if the brat near thing is an ascension, Of the herd verse 3. Or of the flocks as an ascension verse 10. Or an ascension. Of a brought near thing of the birds verse 14. And so, The the lord is showing us here that Uh, what is being pictured or teaching us here?

That what is being pictured? Here is the person himself ascending to god. Although this of course, is still like we say the picture book. But, The lord Jesus Christ. Uh, having said his blood And born the wrath of god. Uh, did indeed. Um, not only rise again. Uh, bodily gloriously.

But then ascend and those who are united to him. Who as it were. As in verse 4, lay their hands upon his head press Down upon him, rest upon him. Those who rest upon him are united to Christ and are seated with him in the heaven leads and shall actually Paula him when we have a glorious resurrection.

Like this. We will, of course our souls when we die. Will be made, perfect in holiness, and depart and be with Christ where he is bodily. Uh, but our hope is full of resurrection. To. To be with him. Even gloriously physically. As well. Now. The. The first thing that we see here is that the worshiper has to select Uh, what he will bring.

This is something that as the best thing that he can. Uh, that he is able to purchase. Or provide from his own. Heard or flock. He is to break, so it's not like saying there's multiple choice. Like, you could be someone who Uh, who has A bowl that you can live without but decides to give the turtle dove because it's cheaper.

Uh no this is reckon. This is teaching us that god gives to all of his people regardless of Their economic. Um, Ability. They're Their financial status. He gives to all of them. The ability to draw near by an ascension offering. And if all they can afford is, Uh, the turtle dove well, that's what they break.

And so there's a recognition. That what you have is or what your financial status is, is in the providence of god. And that that's god, is merciful to you to bring in here even if you happen to be. Um, Very poor in earthly things. And you are then under obligation to select the best.

If it's if it's the From the herd. So a bull or from the flock, either sheep or a goat. It has to be a male. He doesn't require it with turtle doves, it's much more difficult to figure out if you've got a male or a female with the Uh, with the turtle dove.

But the a male In part, because the mail, the Animal is going to be your substitute and it's going to be your representative. Federal heads, federal representatives are ordinarily, male. Although, Uh, the lord does make accommodation for his people. For inheritance. That comes. Uh, through a daughter if the lord does not give any sons, but federal representation is through a male.

And, Uh we this becomes even more important to us when you get out of the picture book and into the reality because our lord Jesus. Um, of course. Is male. And so, you select according to What the lord has appointed. You know, like we're Memorizing this week with what is the Lord's supper and we say, bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment Someone says, well, why do you Uh, select the wine instead of the the juice that Historically, traditionally has been offered alongside the elements that Christ commanded.

Why do you choose why? I don't like one. I i like grape juice. Says someone and the other one should say. Yeah, but you don't take what you like at the lord's supper. You take according to Christ's appointment, just like we confess. And our confession, and And catechisms. So they select.

First of all a male, according to Christ's appointment. But then, they also have to Consider. Among the males that they have and pick the very best one that they have. Without blemish. Uh, recognizing that, that which ascends to To the lord. Must be holy. Christ, of course, is The the blameless lamb.

From the foundation of the world. But even we, when we follow Christ must be holy in order to do so. Without holiness, we will not see the lord. Hebrews 12, when if we see him as he is then we will be pure. As he is pure first. John three.

Uh, if you don't have the wedding garment, the clean garment of holiness, you do not get to be in the. You do not get welcomed into the wedding feast. As Lord teaches in the parable. And so these were things that they were already learning. Uh, by having to choose and present.

Um the animal before god, yes it means you. All you should always give God your very best. That's true. But that's not the great truth here. Uh, the great truth here is that Uh, the one whom the lord gives is his beloved son with whom he as well, pleased and we are to give And well, they were together.

We are to come only with christ. Uh, you don't bring yourself in yourself, you don't come through anyone else. Uh, you come only through the lord jesus. Now, Uh, there's no longer selecting from the herd, or from the flock, or from the dove coat. Uh, now He has been selected for us.

He has Shed his blood once for all he has ascended. Once. Once for all, And we come through him, who is our anchor in the holy of holies? Um, week by week, we come boldly.

Our bodies washed with pure water, and our Our hearts, our consciences sprinkled clean from an evil conscience. Okay, so there's this. Selection. First of all, then there's this identification. Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering. And this is a A heavy. Uh, resting leaning upon It's not just a touching, it's a word that means something more like laying hold of.

Grabbing. Uh, there's Pressure and strength being exerted behind this verb. Uh, and so it's it's literally a forceful image, addresses, something upon us. Um, And it's not as some have said, a transfer of the sin and one of the ways we can know that is because this animal upon which he leans his hand upon which he leans himself.

Uh, It still goes up to the lord. On the day of atonement in chapter 16, when you have A setting of the hands upon the head of Of one of the goats and confessing all the sins. Of israel. Uh, that goat is not the one that is offered up unto the lord that is the one that's driven away into the wilderness that is cut off and put outside the camp.

And so this is an identification. When he leans on the goat, he says, this goat is, as i am, i am identified with it or the bull. Uh, sorry, in this case, it's It's the bowl. We assume it happens with the go but it doesn't. Uh, say it per se.

Intend and following for the garden. So you're saying this bowl is as i am, what happens. Uh, with this bowl happens. Happens with me and he may then rejoice as the procedure. Is. That completed and the bowl is transformed and ascends that the lord is welcoming welcoming him giving him hope.

Of ascension to god at the last, i hope that will ultimately be realized only in the lord jesus christ. So it's a identification ceremony. Not a transfer. Uh, ceremony. And once he has identified with it, it is accepted in his behalf to make a tonement for him. Uh, now, there are various Various things that are involved in this making a tournament but at the whole as a whole, you can actually see in the english word.

Uh, the reconciliation that a tournament really means. Act one meant That the The fracture that has taken place between the worshiper and god, the separation that has taken place Putting the man outside of Eden, putting Moses outside of the tabernacle. On the glory of god was filling the tabernacle putting us apart from god and outside with the enemies rather than in in with him in fellowship.

That that fracture is being reconciled. The enmity is being. Uh, destroyed. The dividing wall is being broken down to use the reconciliation language of Ephesians 2 Now, it's true. That the hebrew word for atonement is. Sometimes used to talk about ransom from death, it has sometimes used. Or frequently used to talk about ransom from death, or cleansing from sin and that's Uh, but, and those things are part of atonement.

But those reason, those things are part of atonement is because they are necessary in order to bring us near to god. Here is the great thing. That the lord jesus was doing and removing our guilt and purchasing us by his blood. And doing all of the things. By his sacrifice.

By especially by the shutting of his blood to secure. Uh, our reconciliation to god. And so, the Yeah, especially if you have become accustomed to thinking of a tournament primarily as obtaining forgiveness or primarily as cleansing. From impurity. I want you to. To remember that, it involves all of those things.

As part of reconciling us to god and it does help. I think That the english word that was invented for this. Uh, has within it, still the parts. Of what it is. That christ is are at one minute. Uh, but what, what a wonderful what wonderful news this would have been for the israelites as i hear this.

Um, Uh, from verse 4. Uh, that They may identify with that which god has already provided and they select and they examine and they're presenting to him. That god has. Provided for them. To be reconciled with him. Uh, with him with himself. Uh, by means of the substitute or this identity, this one that is identified.

With. Uh, so this whole thing Is really making requirements of the heart as well. Uh, don't get don't give in. Uh, to And i don't know if it comes naturally from our flesh. God helping me. I hope i have not taught you this way, but i grew up hearing, or at least thinking that i heard that kind of in the old testament, you had the religion of regulations, and in the new testament, you have The religion of the heart not true at all.

There would be, there would be lots of points along the way. Where you are, engaging god from the heart. Am i really giving him the bet? The the type of animal that i can. Um, That i can afford or am. Are my settling to give god less and Am i really wanting to give him the very best?

Of that type of animal. Am i really identifying myself? As one, who has been estranged from god, who has been god's enemy, who needs blood to take away, my guilt to, who needs to be cleansed from my impurity. Is ascending to god and drawing near to him really the desire of my heart.

Right? So all of these words and and all of these parts of the ceremony are very, very heart oriented for the spirit helped worshipping sinner. It's very similar to when we come to worship god through the lord jesus christ. And you may come thoughtfully, remembering all these things, engaging engaging god himself as you come through christ as the one who was needy and god has provided for that need with jesus, the substitute for you and and ascending to him and being with him as the great thing and all of your existence or You can come and just kind of go through the motions read all the things and you're supposed to read the things.

Saying or mumble thing. Uh, all the things and you're supposed to do that, be quiet and take a nap and, you know, between the beginning of the prayer and when you hear it, start to wind up and you know, you snap too and there's an in jesus name or Or our father, and You can go through all the motions without engaging god.

But the religion of God, reconciling people to himself in christ. Whether prospectively That as in what we have here or Retrospectively and presently as As we come through christ week by week. The risen and descended one. It's it's a religion of the heart and we should be depending upon the lord.

To do that. Work in us. Yeah, verse 5 continues. You slaughters the bowl before the lord. Uh, he literally, he Uh, he cuts its throat. This is the fastest way to drain and produce all the blood. Uh, if you have the bowl or the goat or the sheep, The priest is able to capture uh the blood and the vessel, there's enough blood for that.

If you just have the bird, Um there's there's not that much blood in the bird. So the priest rings the head off of Of the bird and pours the blood directly out of the bird. Uh, And, But, For the bowl or for, The sheep or the goat. It's not the priest who slaughters.

It's the worshiper, who does Again god assigning to him that which reminds him. That he must die. That blood must be shed. To take away guilt and declines from

impurity. And even the language now of our dying to self. Means the same thing. We die to ourselves when we believe Jesus Christ and hope in him alone and heard, we die to the idea.

Of any. Works that we do being able to make us right with God. And then for the rest of our life, it's a continual dying to ourselves. Uh, to put away sin and hate sin, and instead be alive unto God and Jesus Christ. The stuff that we've been hearing about in Romans, in the midweek meetings.

Living from our union with Jesus ministered to us by our spirit and recognizing that. Um, throughout our lives are. There's that, which is going to come from our flesh and there's that, which is going to come from Christ by his spirit that which is going to come by his spirit.

And this is pictured too. The Israelite worshiper who comes in the ascension to offering and has to cut the throat. Uh, of the animal himself. Then there's a use of the blood, which consecrates the worship, the blood in this case is applied to the altar. By the time we get done.

With Leviticus, the priests will have applied. All sorts of bloods to all sorts of furnishings. Um, there's going to be pourings and splatterings and sprinkles and Uh, sprinklings and Everything. But immersion. Uh, and the blood is going to be used to consecrate the worship. To show that. The Lord removes the guilt removes the impurity.

In order. To consecrate the worship that it might be acceptable and pleasing to have. And the same is true with the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes. We rejoice that our guilt is removed and that the impurity of our sin is removed. But the point of setting the blood is to consecrate us for worship so that we can come near.

And to consecrate the worship for us. In fact, the book of Hebrews says, That whereas the copies were consecrated by animal blood, Jesus has consecrated heaven. By his blood. Uh for us, the he is consecrated, not that copies, the shadows but the realities

Yeah, and then finally, after everything. Has been prepared. The blood has been said, consecration. Has been made. The ascension can finally take place. The priest. The worshiper while the priest is applying the blood. Uh, now the worshiper cuts. Uh, some parts out, skins it, and he cuts it into its pieces and Everything.

Except at first, the entrails on the legs, Uh, he hands over to the priest and the priest is doing his arranging the wood and his arranging the pieces. And the worshiper is washing the guts and the legs to make sure there's no excrement nothing.

Dirty or filthy. Uh, left in it. And, And then the whole thing. Having been or arranged by the priest. Is. Uh, burned up and the word for burned here. That are multiple words for burned. And the one here for burning it on, the altar is actually a word that comes from the root for the word smoke.

Um, that's not burning to be consumed. The idea is that it is transformed into smoke. So that it can ascend and there's this Um, This. Refrain. In verse 9. And in verse 13, and in verse 17, That it is an ascension. And offering made by fire. And a sweet aroma and it's actually translating two words that both mean sweet aroma.

A very pleasing. Um, Uh, thing unto God as it ascends, and the Lord is making a way. For us to come near. And so this is not destruction but transformation for ascension, that is being Uh, Presented here. Displayed here. But in this sacrifice, With glorious and marvelous provision. Now, there's Three main offerings, the ascension.

That is the big one. Uh, next week, Lord willing we will consider the tribute offering in chapter 2. That, which is Brought to God as tribute recognizing him and honoring him as the king. To him all things belong. And then there's a piece offering. Having fellowship with God. It's the one part.

Of these offerings that the ordinary worshiper is given some to each from. He gets to have a meal with God. Um, In the piece of, those are the three main offerings. And then if there's a sin that has been committed, depending on what kind of sin there are. Uh, there are two different kinds of sin offerings and one of those are would have to be done if there's a particular said.

That is occasioning the whole. The whole thing you'd have to do one of those and then you'd come back. And do these three. But the whole altogether. Are showing God resolving. All of. Uh, the enmity. Uh, God bringing us. To be hit belong to him and enjoy fellowship with him.

With himself, this is what God is doing. And the Lord Jesus Christ. And what we see here in all the, Of described to you in these 15 verses. Is that God makes away. For us. Not just to come near to some things on earth. But that God is making the way for us to us and to himself.

Having been forgiven cleansed completely reconciled. And ascending to them as those who have been made by his grace by his work. Pleasing. To him. What a glorious provision then. Is this ascension offering?

Our Father in heaven, we pray that you would help us to remember.

Glorious provision that you have made for us in Christ. We thank you for. The way you put so many things in the process of procedure. For the Israelites to address their hearts. And get them to engage with you. We confess oh, Lord. That whenever we do, not the fault is with us.

That's how we come to you. Even with that fault, we ask that your Holy Spirit would help us particularly in the public worship as we are coming to it. To come conscientiously mindfully thoughtfully. Aware of what an amazing thing you are giving us week by week. And then O Lord.

Help us. To think about our whole life and preparing. To. Ascend to you. First soul. And then, The resurrection body. That that we would engage you from the heart not only in the public worship. But in our life as a whole, Thank you, Lord. For giving us as a family as a household.

To have our times with you. In this and the rest of your wonderful scripture, grant that your spirit would keep writing. The truths of it on our hearts. We ask in Jesus name Amen.