

# Approaching God through Christ, Our Burnt Offering

**Preached by:** Matthew S. Black

**Text:** Leviticus 1:1-9

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**Introduction:** Open your Bible to the third book of Moses, the book of Leviticus. In our text this morning, we will see Christ in every detail of the burnt offering that the believing Jews offered in the Tabernacle and the Temple. Those Jews that looked forward to Christ were Spirit-filled believers, and part of Christ's body, the church. We stand upon their shoulders as the elect of God and children of the promise as the Israel of God. We are looking into matters this morning that angels fear to tread. We are stepping upon holy ground as we look into the picture of Jesus Christ, the Saviour, in the burnt offering of Leviticus chapter 1. Therefore, the title of this morning's message is "Approaching God through Christ, Our Burnt Offering." Let's stand together and read Leviticus chapter 1.

[Stand and read Leviticus 1]

We will be focusing in on verses 1-9.

## **Leviticus 1:1-9**

1 And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock.

3 If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. 4 And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. 5 And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 6 And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces. 7 And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire: 8 And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar: 9 But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

The *most important* question that anyone can ask is: how can an impure, sinful person find access into the presence of God who is holy, righteous and "the heavens are not clean in his sight" (Job 15:15). God from before the foundation provided a way. Before any creature had been formed; before an angel had praised God's holiness; when there were all but in the mind of God, God knew that He would create angels and a portion of them would fall and become devils. And God knew He would create man, and the entire

race would fall in Adam, and they would all take on the nature of devils. God says to every single man that is born into this world, (as found in John 8:44), “Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.” We all have the nature of devils—that’s what Jesus says, and we are all born with “the mark of the beast.” We are all born with the nature of lusts and sinful inclinations of Satan himself. Just as a child can be said to have the looks and markings of his father, so does each person that is born a son of Adam have the lusts of his father the devil. And for all eternity past, God knew this, and planned a way in which we could approach God! He planned the coming of His Son into the world, for Christ is “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (**Revelation 13:8**).

The only way we can approach a holy righteous God is through Christ. It has always been that way. Immediately after the fall, the offering of the sacrifice began as a picture-prophecy of the Lord Jesus who would come into the world. Remember Able gave that more excellent sacrifice, and jealous Cain slew him for it! We must approach God through Christ—that is the picture of the burnt offering in Leviticus chapter 1.

Jesus said in **John 14:6**, “I am *the* way, *the* truth, and *the* life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Jesus said in **John 10:1**, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up **some other way**, the same is a **thief and a robber**.”

There is no other way to approach God! Jesus Christ is the only way for “*there is one* God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (**1 Timothy 2:5**).

That brings us to our text in Leviticus 1. Our first point is that...

- I. If we are to approach God correctly, we must first see our **SIN**.
  - A. First we must look at the current state of the **Jews** in this context. To really understand Leviticus 1, we must first understand the covenant God made with the people at Sinai. We read in Exodus 20 and following that God gives these people His Law, the Ten Commandments. Remember, the Law is a mirror of God’s holiness and our wickedness. That is why they must come to God with a sacrifice! They need their wickedness covered!

Turn over to **Exodus 24**. Remember Exodus 20-23 is the giving of God’s Law. Let’s read verses 1-8.

1 And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. 2 And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him. 3 And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with

one voice, and said, **All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.** 4 And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. 5 And he sent young men of the children of Israel, **which offered burnt offerings**, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. 6 And Moses took half of the blood, and put *it* in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. 7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, **All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.** 8 And Moses took the blood, and **sprinkled it on the people**, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

So here you have the “young men of the children of Israel” offering burnt offerings before the people.

The charge to these people was “Cursed *be* he that confirmeth not *all* the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen” (**Deuteronomy 27:26**).

Had they kept God’s Law? Even for one day? No! David would later say in **Psalm 14:1-3**, “They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is none that doeth good.* 2 The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and seek God.* 3 They are all gone aside, they are *all together* become filthy: *there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*”

Do you see what is true about the Jews is true about us?

B. We must now look at the current state of all **mankind**.

The apostle Paul would later say in **Romans 3:11-12**, “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

God’s perfect Law was given to remind the sinner that he was constantly unfit to meet God. **Deuteronomy 27 and 28** are filled with the phrase “cursed *be*...” The whole idea of what God says in the Scriptures is that the one who does not keep God’s Word perfectly and sinlessly is cursed! They are wicked and unprofitable—good for nothing but to be put into the refuse pile—hell—Gehenna.

You see, God is extreme in His holiness! Jonathan Edwards in his sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” speaks of God’s offence at our sin! Edwards says:

Your wickedness makes you as heavy as lead, and adds a downwards tendency with great weight and pressure towards hell; and if

God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf; and your good health, and your own care and prudence, and best plans for salvation, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell, than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock. Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you for one moment; for you are a burden to it: the creation groans with you...

He continues and makes it very clear how much God hates our wickedness!

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some detestable insect, over the fire, detests you, and is **dreadfully provoked**: His wrath towards you burns like fire; He looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be thrown into the fire; He eyes are too pure than to bear to have you in His sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in His eyes, than the most hateful venomous snake is in ours. You have offended Him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince: and yet, it is nothing but His hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. It is to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell last night; that you were allowed to awake up again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep. And there is no other reason to be given, why you have not dropped into hell since you arose this morning, but that God's hand has held you up.

If we are going to approach God, we must approach Him, not with a smug attitude about our sin, but with full awareness of His holiness and full understanding of our sin and His wrath against it. We must approach God as **Isaiah did in chapter 6** of his prophecy. He testifies, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up...Above it stood the seraphims...And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. ...[AND WHAT WAS ISAIAH'S RESPONSE?] Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

We must not approach God in our own righteousness! We must say with Isaiah in **Isaiah 64:6**, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

To say that man can do any good is a lie! It cannot happen. Job says in **Job 14:4**, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Job goes on to say (Job 15:15-16), "the heavens are not clean in [God's] sight."

16 How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?"

**Titus 3:3** tells us that we are all born "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another."

How can someone like this approach God? We cannot come to Him without a covering! We must come in the righteousness of another!

So, first we see that if we are to approach God correctly, we must see our sin!

II. Secondly, if we are to approach God, we must also see the **sacrifice** of Christ. We see this in our text. Remember, this burnt offering sacrifice is a *picture-prophecy* of the atonement of Jesus Christ!

A. The sacrifice was **sinless** (without **blemish**). We see this clearly in our text.

**Leviticus 1:3** If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish:

Look over at **1 Peter 1:18-19**, "ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."

1. First notice that Christ is offered **sinlessly**. "a lamb without blemish and without spot..." Christ lived a blameless life! **Hebrews 4:15** tells us that he "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."
2. Second notice that Christ is offered **exclusively**. "ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...19 But with the precious blood of Christ..." Dear friend, you are not purchased with Christ plus the saints, or with Christ plus the virgin Mary. No! Christ said in **John 14:6**, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
3. Third notice that Christ is offered **particularly**. "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" Do you see that Peter says all of these offerings were picture-prophecies of Christ! Christ was "foreordained before the foundation of the world". He is the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (**Revelation 13:8**). Abraham rejoiced to see His day, and he saw it and was glad! (**John 8:56**). Anyone who is accepted is "accepted in the beloved" (**Ephesians 1:7**). For "there is

none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:12).

So the sacrifice had to be sinless, without blemish. We see Christ in this! Then we see...

- B. The sacrifice must be **submitted** by the offerer (brought voluntarily). “(3) he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD.

Must be brought *voluntarily*. What is it that stirs a man or a woman to bring the sacrifice? We read that it is “his own voluntary will”. What is it that has stirred this man’s will? Well let’s be clear—man’s will was corrupted in the fall, so what is it that stirs him and raises him up to bring this offering? What is it that brings this man to come with the sacrifice to the door? It is the law of God!

**Psalm 19:7**, “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul...”

**Galatians 3:24** tells us, “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”

The man is smitten by his sin! He is made desperate by the Law of God! It is not this man that stirs himself up, but the Spirit of God, for it is He alone that will “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of [the] judgment [to come]” (John 16:8).

So, please do not ever attribute salvation to moral power of man’s free will. This would be a mistake. Is there moral power there when man freely chooses Christ? Yes!! Absolutely! But the choice to come out of the grave was given to him, just as it was given to Lazarus! To say that I chose him because I wanted to would be like saying Lazarus raised himself from the dead! We need to say with John in **1 John 4:19** “We love him, because he first loved us”!!

Sinless, submitted by the offerer, a substitute,

- C. The sacrifice is a **substitute**. 4 And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. The sinner must personally lay his sins upon the sacrifice. There is no substitute if there is no repentance. Repentance is seeing my sin as God sees it—hating it, and laying it upon the substitute.

**John 1:29** The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Sinless, submitted by the offerer, a substitute, slaughtered

- D. Then we see the sacrifice must be **slaughtered** before the Lord. “5 And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD:

Christ’s life was blameless, but a blameless life is not enough to atone for sin and remove the barrier from the door. Christ must die, and He must die “before the LORD.” His death was the Father’s doing, and not man’s.

**Isaiah 53:10-11** Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; ...11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied

Sinless, submitted by the offerer, a substitute, slaughtered before the Lord, and then

- E. Then we see the sacrifice brings **spiritual life** (5) and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall bring the blood, and **sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.**

Here we see that the blameless one becomes the lifeless one! The blood, which signifies life must be applied both to the altar and to the heart.

The blood saved the Jews in Egypt! They were to put the blood of the Lamb on their door posts, and what does God say in **Exodus 12:13?** “And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you...”

Dear friend, do you understand that “there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5)?

Turn back to **Exodus 24**. Remember Exodus 20-23 is the giving of God’s Law. Let’s begin with verse 5.

5 And [Moses] sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. 6 And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. 7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. 8 And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

Moses “sprinkled” the blood on the people. You see it is the LIFE of Christ that gives us life.

**Leviticus 17:11** For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the **blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.**

**Hebrews 9:22** And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and **without shedding of blood is no remission.**

**Dear friend**, the Bible says in Hebrews 12:24 that the blood still speaks today! Christ's blood is still effectual—it can “remove” your sin “as far as the east is from the west.” If you apply the blood, he'll banish your sin to the deepest sea, and he'll “remember your sin no more” (**Jeremiah 31:34**).

And the blood of Christ not only takes away your sin, it gives you *spiritual life*!!

So in order to approach God, we need to see our **sin**, we need to see the **sacrifice** of Christ, and then...

- III. Finally, if we are to approach God, we must see and appropriate the **salvation** God has provided.

So the sinner here in Israel would come to the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation. This is where God was. He was in the Holy of holies. They could not go to God. They had to first come to the altar. They would bring the best of their flock and offer it before the priest. The priest would examine it and make sure it was “without blemish.” Then the sinner would lean the weight of his hands upon the sacrifice and by so doing transfer his sin.

What would happen next? The sinner himself (verse 5) would “kill the bullock” before the Lord. Then we look down at Leviticus 1 and verse 6:

6 And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces. 7 And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire: 8 And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar: 9 But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and **the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.**

The sacrifice was completely consumed!

Christ when he was on the cross cried, “It is finished” (John 19:30). Dear friend, Christ was put in our place. You deserve to be completely consumed in hell for all eternity, but look what Christ has done for us!

**1 Peter 3:18** For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God...

**2 Corinthians 5:21** For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.



**Conclusion:** Are you able to approach God this morning? Are you coming to God through Christ? Christ says “I am *the* way, *the* truth, and *the* life.” There is no other way to approach God!!