

### LEVITICUS

#### Lesson 6 - Chapter 4

Let's review a little. So far, we've looked at 3 different sacrifices, also called "offerings": the 'Olah.....the burnt offering; the Minchah.....the grain offering; and the Zevah.....the peace offering. Each had different purposes and occasions for their use.

All had in common that the offering, whether animal or grain, had to be burnt up on the Brazen Altar. But, it is also key to understand that NONE of these offerings had to do with the commission of sins.....none dealt with atonement for trespasses against God per se. Rather, they dealt with several aspects of Man's corrupt NATURE before God. That is if a man were able to *never* break even ONE of God's laws, that man could never escape the fact that the absence of poor behavior did not change his nature; and it is his nature which is the determining factor for his acceptability to God. Our acceptability to Yehoveh was not, and still is not, based as much on our behavior as our nature. And man's nature, as always, was predetermined; since Adam and Eve, all men's natures were evil in God's eyes. Period. And God cannot accept a sinful nature (as is) anymore than He can accept sinful actions without there being consequences within His justice system.

However God did provide a legal means for man to make atonement for his naturally evil nature. When I say legal, I mean it in the context that it was done in accordance with the "laws" and "regulations" that God issued as part of His legal system.....His mishpat. And the 'Olah was first among these remedies. The 'Olah *first* got God's attention, and then provided a means for God to view the worshipper favorably....that is the worshipper became acceptable to God by means of the 'Olah. The Hebrew sense of the word is that the worshipper is allowed to "come-near" the Lord....to approach the Lord.

The Minchah built upon what was accomplished by the 'Olah. After the 'Olah made the worshipper approachable and acceptable to God (no one can approach God until he's FIRST acceptable to God), then the worshipper may offer a gift to God. This gift is more in the nature of tribute.....that is, it is a required gift.....a ransom. And, by doing what is required, the worshipper (by paying the prescribed price) thereby expresses his dedication to Yehoveh and a desire to be obedient.

The Peace offering next built upon the work of the 'Olah and Minchah. The Peace offering established a fellowship, shalom, between the worshipper and God Almighty, that could not occur until a) God found the worshipper acceptable to Him, and b) tribute....that could also be viewed as a ransom.....was paid. Together, the 3 offerings, the 'Olah, Minchah, and Zevah, established and maintained peace and fellowship with Yehoveh despite man's inherent sinful nature.

Now let's take a look at the pattern and principles that are emerging here; because much into the future a transformation is going to occur in the sacrificial system, and Yeshua is going to become the fulfilled "type" that is being presented in Leviticus.

We find that there is a prescribed WAY we are to deal with a holy God, there is a prescribed sequence we must approach Yehoveh, and that sin is present in a number of ways within individuals and groups, and that sin is present not only in our behavior but in the very fiber of our being. And nobody gets a mulligan; no one can approach God using a different method, or in a different sequence, and nobody is exempt from their natural born condition of wickedness nor from responsibility for the requirement to obey God's laws and regulations.

What we find when reading the NT and the passages about the life and work of Christ on our behalf is that the first thing that His death and resurrection did for those who put their faith in Him, is that it made us, Believers, acceptable to God. It all starts there. And God has no interest in our gifts to Him if we are not FIRST acceptable to Him.....If **we** are not acceptable, then our gifts, or better our ransom, to Him are not acceptable. And if we are not acceptable to Him, and our gifts, our ransom, are not acceptable to Him, then there can be no peace between Him and us.

Again, notice, that the issue about the acceptability of men to Yehoveh, by means of Christ, is not about our sinful actions and behaviors.....it is about our sinful **natures**. St. Paul often uses the expression "the power of sin" when he is referring to problem of our having this corrupt nature. I think we sometimes get what Paul said a little confused, because we think that expression "the power of sin" is referring to power like in the term "electrical power", or "horsepower", or "what a powerful man". Rather, I see this more in the sense of the spiritual....as in principalities and powers. Or the powers of the underworld or of evil. That is, Paul is referring to the unseen controlling entity, an evil domain, that spiritually dark nature that lives within all of us, until it is replaced with the Holy Spirit. So when Paul says, "the power of sin", it is in reference to man's naturally sinful condition that influences every aspect of our lives. You see just as with the sacrifices ordained in Leviticus, there is much that has to happen before God is even interested in dealing with our sinful **behaviors**. First our nature must be dealt with; then our behavior can be addressed. This is the God-ordained order of things.

As Believers we don't become acceptable to God because we stop trespassing against God. God doesn't clean us up a bit, first, and when we reach some level of behavior that is "good enough", then God says, "Bingo! Now you are acceptable to me!" No. Rather, Christ is as the 'Olah, the burnt offering, the offering that allows us to come near to God. Yeshua's death, and His having been our sacrifice, makes you and me acceptable to the Father.....IF we'll appropriate what Jesus did simply by believing it and trusting Him. Only AFTER we become acceptable to Him.....Baptists called it being saved, evangelicals call it born again.....does He begin to deal with our trespasses against Him. First we must have our NATURE made acceptable to the Father. And, this is accomplished by the sacrifice of Christ and the simultaneous exchange of natures within us: the instant we accept our Messiah our old Nature is exchanged for a new, clean holy nature. And this is in the form of the Holy Spirit that comes to indwell in us.

Now I'm sure many of you are saying, 'so what about Christ paying for our sins (sins, plural), our trespasses, our bad behaviors'? Yes, He does that too. But in a very real way the required FIRST step is that He pays a price to give us the ability to approach the Father, to be acceptable to the Father. Now I don't want to leave the impression as though I'm describing a 3-step program to peace with God; that's not how it works. In the physical we do things in a serial fashion; one step after the other. The Levitical Sacrificial System worked that way; there were physical altars, physical sacrifices, etc. So there was a sequential order of ritual and each ritual dealt with a particular aspect of the process. God was breaking His plan down, showing it to us in bits and pieces, in a simplistic way a human could grasp; showing us the principles, the pattern, the many facets of sin, atonement, and forgiveness. And in this He was showing us His Holiness and His justice.

After dealing with our sinful natures in the first 3 chapters of Leviticus, now, in chapter 4, Yehoveh will begin to deal with our sinful behaviors.

### READ LEVITICUS CHAPTER 4 all

Although we're not going to get to chapter 5 today, nor will we likely finish chapter 4, we need to know that chapters 4 and 5 are tied together, in that, together, they define a new type of sacrifice. Scholars, who just love big words, called the 2 sacrifices of Leviticus 4 and 5, when taken together as a particular class or type, expiatory. That is, they are designed to atone for acts of sin. In fact the usual title for the sacrificial offering of Chapter 4, and often also for Chapter 5, is "the sin offering". But we're not going to use that title because it really does a disservice to what is intended.

In Hebrew the sacrifice of Leviticus chapter 4 is called the "Hatta'at". And it carries with it the sense of being a sacrifice for the purpose of purifying the sinner in order to relieve him of his guilt before Yehoveh, BECAUSE this human has committed a transgression against Yehoveh. In other words its not the **action** that is being addressed, it's the polluted condition of the worshipper that has resulted BECAUSE of his act of transgression that is being dealt with. It is assumed that the worshipper had been in ritually pure or clean state; that he was un-polluted by the guilt of sins but NOW he did something that was against God's holiness and something had to be done about it. Now that he had committed this offense he was no longer pure before God.....and therefore, he needed to be purified. So in Torah Class we are going to call this sacrifice of Leviticus 4 the "Purification Offering".

Just so you don't think that I'm redefining words and rolling my own new theology, understand that the typical English translation of "sin offering" (when translating the Hebrew term Hatta'at) is NOT a direct translation of the word; rather it is called a **functional** translation. That is there IS no such thing as a "translation" for the word Hatta'at; Hatta'at has no equivalent word in another language. Rather all that can be done is to restate the purpose of the Hatta'at; it's function, in English (or whatever language). Since the Hatta'at is NOT technically an offering to atone for THE unacceptable behavior that has been committed, calling it a "sin offering" gives us the wrong impression of the purpose. From a functional aspect the Hatta'at repairs the condition of the worshipper who has committed a sin...it purifies that worshipper.

Therefore a better translation of the FUNCTION of the Hatta'at is that it is a PURIFICATION offering.

Verse 1 starts out by making it clear that what was about to proceed was STILL Yehoveh's command to Moses; this was NOT a proclamation by people in authority this was God speaking. And verse 2 tells us that the Hatta'at is concerned with purifying the worshipper from Unintentional sin. And we'll discuss this "unintentional" aspect, which in chapter 4 leans more towards the idea of the sin being inadvertent (accidental), a little more when we get to Chapter 5.

Now I talked a few minutes ago about the principles and the pattern that were being established in the first 3 sacrifices of Leviticus, and how these would carry over to the rest of Scripture, even to Christ's ministry and purpose. The Hatta'at, the 4th sacrifice, brings another aspect to the nature of sin, its' effects, and the assault on God's holiness that it causes. What we're doing when we study Leviticus is what I call "walking around the rock". For those of you who haven't been graced with this little bit of folk-wisdom before, let me explain: if you encounter a very large rock, a giant boulder, and wish to examine it and describe it you have to start at one point and walk all the way around its circumference. As you walk around that rock, if you were to stop and takes notes as to exactly what it looked like (it's coloration, its surface, it's feel, whether it had sharp edges or was more curved) what you wrote down would depend on where you were standing at any given moment; as you moved and looked at the rock from a slightly different position so would it's appearance change. To get a proper and full understanding of ALL of the physical aspects of that rock you would have to view it from many positions and angles; and this is because the rock is a random shape. It looks somewhat different depending upon where you stop and look at it. And if you decide to stand only at one spot and describe the rock from but one angle, you're going to get a very distorted and incomplete view of the overall picture and nature of that rock.....even though from the precise point that you're standing you are certainly accurately reporting what it is you are observing.

Discussing sin and atonement is like that. In our sound-byte age, we tend to think we can reduce almost every Scriptural principle to a handful of Christian cliché's and clever sayings. And these sayings may not be wrong; but often they are so simplistic as to be rather useless. So Leviticus takes us a long way around the rock of sin and atonement, stopping to examine its many facets at a number of places. And we're going to find that sin is a complex issue and that perhaps it is even more serious, and present in more forms in our lives, than we have ever given thought to.

You see the main problem with sin is that it can destroy the relationship between man and God. Sin presents the **greatest** danger to the covenant relationship that God created in order that man might live in peace, in shalom, with Him. And sin brings with it consequences that were often unintended, unforeseen, and sometimes have no resolution. One of the most catastrophic consequences for man is that sin can precipitate God's wrath. I will tell you bluntly that I have encountered MANY Christians who have said something like, "I don't believe in God's wrath". Or, more often, "I don't want to HEAR about God's wrath". If you don't believe God pours out His wrath in judgment, or that He is not a God of love AND

judgment, then I fear for you because you don't understand the serious nature of sin and its consequences. By the time we're through with Leviticus you will see just HOW seriously God take sin.....and it's not a pretty picture.

This 4th class of sacrifice in Leviticus (the Hatta'at) deals then with the **precarious state** the person who sinned finds himself in. It's as though the person who has sinned has been poisoned with such a powerful toxin that he is very liable not to survive. The Hatta'at, the Purification Offering, is the antidote to neutralize that poison. How the person got poisoned, and the precise nature of the toxin, is secondary.....provided it occurred **unintentionally**. What's important is bringing the PERSON back to good health.....removing the debilitating effects of that poison on the person .....bringing that person BACK into a condition of good spiritual health so that his relationship with Yehoveh is not destroyed. Does this make sense to you? The Hatta'at sacrifice is the Lord God Almighty on a rescue mission to rescue the person from his dangerous condition before God that can be SPIRITUALLY fatal.

And we find that the matter of sin is serious enough that (depending on WHO comes into this sinful state due to his trespasses and **what** the trespasser's position is within the community of Israel) there are different ritual procedures prescribed. The High priest has one procedure if he sins, a tribal leader another, a common member of the population another, and even when the nation as a whole transgresses against Yehoveh there is yet a different antidote.

Let's briefly look at each of the levels of Israeli society named in chapter 4 and discuss the various purification procedures appropriate for each. The order of importance of position and status within the Hebrew society is established in this chapter; it is High Priest, then All Israel (the whole congregation), then a tribal leader, and finally a common person. The High Priest, as the most important among these, was therefore addressed first.

Some Bible versions will, in verse 3, use the term "anointed priest".....this is referring to the High Priest, as the High Priest is the only priest anointed with the oil of unction. Since the High Priest is the mediator between God and man, his sinning is a terrible thing and puts not only himself in danger, but the entire NATION of Israel as well. When the High Priest trespasses against God the principal established here is that it has the effect of polluting ALL of Israel. Now let's be clear that in the context of Leviticus 4 these sins of the High Priest were NOT necessarily personal sins of bad behavior.....generally they were errors made in the carrying out of his duties as High Priest. There were other sacrifices that dealt with his personal sins. Since the duties of the High Priest were primarily the carrying out of the various rituals ordained by God that were on BEHALF of the people, when the High Priest goofed-up, he goofed-up on the behalf of the people and so they bore as much guilt as he did.

As a result the Priest had to use the sacrificial animal that was at the top of the sacrificial hierarchy, a mature Bull. While in the 'Olah, the burnt offering, the selection of the animal that would be used for the sacrificial offering varied.....from a Bull all the way down to a bird....it had nothing to do with the extent of a person's sinful nature....it had to do with what a person could reasonably afford.....a Bull being the most expensive and extravagant, a bird being the least. Here in the Hatta'at it's somewhat different. In the Purification Offering the higher the position in Israeli society that the sinning person held the more expensive and larger the animal had to



be. The High Priest, therefore, was responsible to us the largest and most expensive animal offering, a 3-year old Bull.

Just as in the Burnt Offering the animal must be brought into the Tabernacle Courtyard, and there the worshipper.....in this case the High Priest.....performs semikhah (the laying on of hands). And remember this laying on of hands usually carried with it the idea of transferring guilt from the worshipper to the animal....but it also often carried with it the notion of officially designating THAT particular animal as THIS particular worshipper's sacrificial offering. Then the High Priest killed the animal and collected its blood into a ritual vessel.

The blood was taken into the sanctuary, the tent of meeting, and the High Priest dipped his finger into the Bull's blood and sprinkled it, 7 times, onto the Parokhet, the curtain or veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. Let's be clear: the High Priest was standing in the Holy Place, NOT the Holy of Holies when he did this. Now this particular "blood ritual" was unusual. The only other time it actually occurred was on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement; but on Yom Kippur the High Priest actually entered the Holy of Holies. After this, the High Priest dabbed a little blood onto the horns of the Altar of Incense that stood next to the Parokhet in the Holy Place. The remaining blood was poured out at the foot of the Brazen Altar RATHER than what, up to now, had been prescribed, which was that the animal blood was to be splashed onto the 4 sides of the Altar.

Next the Bull was cut up; the fat removed from certain of its inner organs and burned up on the Brazen Altar. It is here, in verse 12, that we get a fairly radical departure from typical sacrificial ritual; all that remains of the Bull is not eaten, nor is it given to the Priests to use as food, nor is it burned up on the Brazen Altar. Rather it is taken to a place designated as OUTSIDE THE CAMP and there it is burned up on a common wood fire, and the ashes place on a special ash heap t hat is also located outside the camp.

Now if we're not careful some important details can escape us do to the problems of translating the original Hebrew to Greek, then the Greek to Latin, then the Latin to English (which is the way most of our Bibles have received their translations). In verse 10 we're told that certain parts of the Bull, mainly the fat, are "burned up" on the Brazen Altar. The Hebrew word used for "burned-up" is **qatar**. And **qatar** is a word that indicates the act of burning that turns a sacrificial offering into smoke.....a smoke that pleases God. It's also a word used when referring to the burning of incense on the Altar of Incense in the Holy Place. The idea is that this kind of burning-up is a positive thing, a holy procedure.

But in verse 12 where the remains of the Bull are carried to a place outside the camp and burned up on common wood fire, the Hebrew word used for "burned up" is different; and the term carries with it a nearly opposite meaning of the word in verse 10 for burning-up. The word to describe the burning-up in this instance is **saraph**. And **saraph** means to destroy with fire.....to destroy by burning. The idea is that you're getting rid of something that is undesirable and unclean. **Saraph** could be used to describe the burning of trash, for instance. So **qatar** deals with holy burning, **saraph** with destruction by burning; **qatar** is constructive, **saraph** is destructive. What is burnt-up on the Brazen Altar is holy and constructive, what is burnt-up outside the camp on a common wood fire is corrupt and destructive.

And, if the word **saraph**.....s-a-r-a-p-h.....sounds familiar to your ears, it should. Because it is the root word of that creature that was hoisted up on the pole by Moses out in the Wilderness.....a **Seraph**....s-E-r-a-p-h. And, usually it is called a fiery dragon, or a fiery serpent...fiery as in burning. We'll also find that a **Seraph** is described in the Bible as being in service to God. But notice that the root word for **saraph** and **seraph** revolves around destruction. And that is probably the key to understanding one of the purposes of the spirit -being that the Bible calls a **Seraph** (we translate it as Seraphim) which guards God's throne room. The Seraphim's job is to visit absolute destruction upon all who are not clean and pure but dare to enter the presence of the Lord.

Let me also state that we'll run across an offshoot of this burning up of a Bull, outside the camp, in the sacrifice of the Red Heifer. Now, most people have heard that term, Red Heifer, and some even know that the Jews are right now on the lookout for a perfect Red Heifer, because it's going to be needed upon the building on the new Temple in Jerusalem. I won't go into it right now but notice that the primary difference between the Hatta'at and the Red Heifer sacrifice is that the High Priest must use a MALE (a Bull) for the Purification Offering; while the offering of the Red Heifer (as you can tell by the name) involves the sacrificing of a FEMALE (a cow, a heifer).

In both cases however the burning up of the animal's remains must be OUTSIDE THE CAMP, so it is the **saraph** kind of burning....that is, it is destructive burning. So exactly what does it mean to be OUTSIDE THE CAMP?

Actually, it's quite literal. God instructed Moses that the Israelites were to encamp all around the Wilderness Tabernacle. And this area of encampment is called "the camp of Israel". This area is considered clean.....that is, clean as in **pure**, not clean as in hygienic (although hygiene was a necessary part of purity). Now exactly where the outermost boundary of the camp of Israel existed in the era of Moses and the Tabernacle we're not told; but it would have been somewhere beyond where the tents of the 12 tribes of Israel were erected. Hundreds of years later when the portable tent that was the Wilderness Tabernacle gave way to a permanent wood and stone building called the Temple, an actual measurement was established to determine what lay inside, and therefore what was outside, the camp. The measurement was always circular, and the center of the circle was the Holy of Holies. So in the time of Jesus the area of the "camp of Israel" was set at a radius of 2000 cubits around the Holy of Holies.....about 3000 feet. That is an imaginary circle was drawn around the around the Holy of Holies on the Temple Mount, with a radius of 3000 feet. Everything inside that circle was inside the camp, and everything beyond (generally speaking) was "outside the camp".

Now what I just told you is well documented in the Mishnah and the only disputable part of it is the exact definition of a cubit, which varied from culture to culture....but generally was around 18 inches.

What is very interesting to me is a comment made by the writer of Hebrews (which is generally presumed to be St. Paul but that is not at all certain) that concerns the precise location where Christ was crucified. Turn your Bibles to Hebrews 13:10-13.

### READ HEBREWS 13:10-13

Notice that Paul (or whoever the writer of Hebrews is) makes an analogy: he says that just as the High Priest brings an offering of blood to the sanctuary as a sin offering (a Hatta'at, the offering we've been studying in Leviticus 4) but the body of the Bull is burned OUTSIDE THE CAMP, so too Jesus was destroyed OUTSIDE THE CAMP and therefore it is there that we must join him.

Now some Bibles, including the CJB, say in verse 12 "outside the gate"; the gate being referred to probably would have been the Eastern Gate. In Jesus day there was a double-decker bridge just outside the Eastern Gate that spanned the valley below and connected the Temple Mount to the Mt. of Olives. It was over this bridge that the Red Heifer and the Scapegoat were taken for the associated rituals, and over which the remains of the Bull for the Purification Offering, the Hatta'at, were transported. You see while thus far in our study of Torah we have identified two altars used as part of the overall sacrificial system.....the Golden Incense Altar that was inside the Holy Place and the Brazen Altar that was just outside the door into the Temple, there was in fact a THIRD Altar, named the Miphkad Altar. This Miphkad Altar was located near the summit of the Mt. of Olives, just OUTSIDE the boundary of the camp of Israel, and it was here that the Red Heifer was burned-up, the Bull remains were turned to ashes, and therefore according to the writer of the Hebrews it was probably very nearby that Miphkad Altar where Christ was crucified.

Hebrews 13:13 says that Christ met his end OUTSIDE THE CAMP. Now, if one draws a 3000 foot circle around the Holy of Holies, it means Christ can NOT have died ANYWHERE within that circle or He would have been INSIDE the camp. And the traditional site where Christ was crucified falls INSIDE THE CAMP.

Here's the point, and there are a couple of points: first, Christ probably was crucified on the Mount of Olives, because the "Camp of Israel" ended part way up the slope of the Mt. of Olives, and therefore was "outside the camp". And we're told in the Gospels that those who viewed Christ's death, upon experiencing an earthquake at the moment He gave up His spirit, turned and looked and saw the veil in the Temple "rent", or tear, from top to bottom. Well, since that outer veil faced eastward, towards the Mt. of Olives, the ONLY place those people could possibly have been in order to actually SEE the veil tear, was on the Mt. of Olives. Virtually anywhere else, it would have been out of their view. The 2nd point is that there is GREAT significance in Jesus dying OUTSIDE THE CAMP. Because it tells us that Christ's death was most akin to the Purification offering FOR THE HIGH PRIEST....and we're told several times that Christ is our High Priest. This procedure of the sacrifice being destroyed outside the camp was **only** used when the High Priest became corrupted by sin (this did not apply to a tribal leader, or the common people). And this particular sacrifice had to be destroyed. What did Jesus say?.....My God, My God, why have you forsaken me (left me)? The Father, for a moment, moved away from Yeshua. And, God's wrath, which is absolute annihilation, complete destruction, fell upon Christ for him to bear.....instead of us.

Now, I'm not at all dogmatic about the location of Jesus' death; the writer of Hebrews provides clues, not absolute evidence. But this demonstrates just how important it is for us to



study and understand the Torah and the Levitical Sacrificial System. To say simply that Christ was “the sacrifice” for us is true. But what KIND of a sacrifice? **Which** of the many types of sacrifices? When Hebrew says that Christ was offered up as a SIN offering, that is a particular KIND of sacrifice.....a Hatta’at.....and a Hatta’at has a very specific purpose. It is not a general or universal kind of sacrifice. Remember that those who originally wrote the NT and the account of Christ’s death were Jews. They well understood the intricacies of the Sacrificial System because it was common knowledge for them. So did Paul just throw in the piece of information about Jesus dying “outside the camp” because it was dramatic or he didn’t give a thought as to what it meant? No this piece of information was quite meaningful to any Jew. Anyway, I don’t want to give the impression that the Hatta’at, the Purification Offering, was the ONLY element of the Sacrificial System that Yeshua fulfilled. But, certainly, the Purification Offering portion was front and center in the book of Hebrews and we ought to take notice.

We’ll finish up chapter 4 next week.