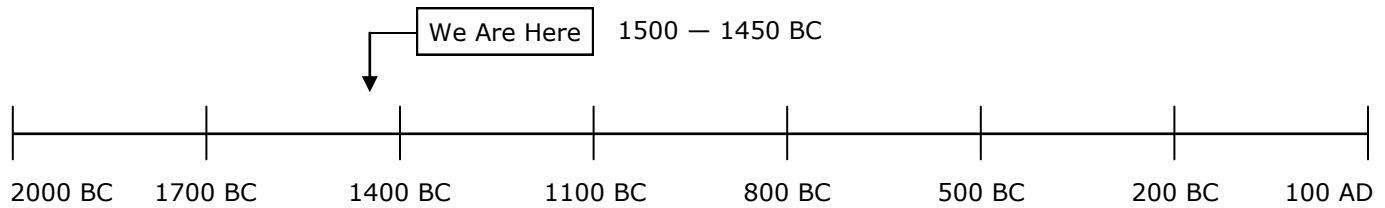


The Seriousness of Sin

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Week 7: February 12-18 — *Exodus 35-40; Leviticus 1-9*

13.4% Complete — 316 Days to Go



Helpful Resources

Christ in the Tabernacle (p.59), Hebrew Calendar (p.61), Our Great High Priest (p.85)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

The Israelites are still at Mt. Sinai. They have paused for a time in order to meet with God, to hear of His individual and national expectations, to receive His laws, and to learn better how to worship Him. To that end, God gives instructions for the building of His sanctuary, the Tabernacle. The people respond with offerings from their wealth from Egypt, and, in the meantime, God sets apart craftsmen to lead out in the construction process. Piece by piece the Tabernacle and its furnishings are completed, after which Moses placed them in their proper positions. When it was finished, God demonstrated His approval by filling the Tabernacle with His glorious presence. Next, it and those Levites and priests who would be serving in it were dedicated and consecrated to the Lord. Then, after God instructed Moses on the procedures for the many offerings, the daily routine of animal sacrifice began; it was to remain until the day Jesus Christ died on the cross as the ultimate sacrifice.

- The Offerings or Sacrifices

Listed below are the five key offerings that the Israelites made to God:

1. **Burnt Offering** (*Lev. 1*): voluntary offering to pay for sins and to prove one's devotion
2. **Grain Offering** (*Lev. 2*): voluntary offering to acknowledge all possessions belong to God
3. **Peace Offering** (*Lev. 3*): voluntary offering to express gratitude, peace, and fellowship
4. **Sin Offering** (*Lev. 4*): required offering for unintentional sins (i.e. uncleanness, neglect)
5. **Guilt Offering** (*Lev. 5*): required offering for sins against God or others

Why so many regulations? By demanding a spotless animal, a holy priest, and minute detail in ritual, the people recognized the seriousness of their sin and the holiness of their God.

- Why So Bloody?

We may be tempted to dismiss this book as bizarre and out of date, but sacrifices were a normal part of the ancient world. Besides, there were reasons God demanded these practices.

1. A life had to be given for sin (*Romans 6:23*); one transferred his sins to the animal which died in his place.
2. The life of a living creature is in the blood (*Lev. 17:11, 14*); thus, blood symbolizes life.
3. Caring for and offering an animal to be slaughtered sobered one to the seriousness of sin.

- The Priests and Levites

God chose the tribe of Levi to represent the people in the sacrificial system; He set it apart for His service (in place of the first-born, *Numbers 8:5-26*). It's interesting to note that God chose the Levites to lead; Levi was the son of Jacob who was "a man of slaughter" (*Genesis 34:24-26*) and who liked to cut up animals for sport (*Genesis 49:5, 6*).

The priestly lineage was established in Levi's descendant, Aaron; he and his sons will administer the sacrifices. The other Levites assisted the priests and took care of the daily needs of the Tabernacle. The Kohathites (who are Levites) were responsible for transporting the Tabernacle. Since the priests and Levites were sinful men, they had to be consecrated (made holy) by the tedious ritual of ordination (*Leviticus 8, 9*).

- Pictures of Christ

1. **The Tabernacle** (25-30) is the clearest picture of Christ in the Old Testament; see the chart entitled "Christ in the Tabernacle" for more details.
2. **The Priests and Their Practices** represent Christ's work of mediation for sinners (*1 Timothy 2:5*). See the visual entitled, "Our Great High Priest," for more details.

- Personal Application

1. **The Seriousness of Sin:** It is clear, after observing all of the bloody rituals that God expected of the Israelites, that He takes sin seriously, and He wanted somehow to communicate that truth to His people. However, with the removal of the sacrificial system at the cross, the New Testament Christian (that's us) does not have that visual to stir our hearts or prick our consciences. Concerning us, God has placed His Spirit within us; the Spirit convicts us of our sins. Though we do not look upon the sacrifice of animals any longer, the cross is our reminder of the seriousness of sin.
2. **Shaped for Serving God** (*Ex. 31:1-6; 35:30-36:3*): Bezalel and Oholiab were gifted by God with various skills in order to oversee the construction of the Tabernacle and its furnishings. God gave to them abilities so that, at the right time, they could be used for His purposes and for the service of worship. Likewise, God gifts all of His people (including you) so that they can be used by Him for His purposes. Each of us has been given unique abilities and spiritual gifts, not so we can use them for our glory and gain, but to be used in the service of His Church, for His glory and the encouragement of others.

Note: Bezalel was the grandson of Hur, the man who helped Moses hold up his arms over the battle against the Amalekites (*Ex. 17:8-16*). In the big picture, Hur was an assistant, almost part of the background, but nonetheless just as important. God has not called all of us to be a Moses or Aaron, out in front of the people, but He still has great need of Hurs, who will faithfully serve Him in whatever role He calls them to fill.

The Bottom Line

God takes *sin* and *servicing* seriously; we should too.

Questions to Consider

1. Even though God still takes sin seriously, oftentimes we do not. Why not?
2. Do you know your spiritual gifts? How are you using them in God's service?