

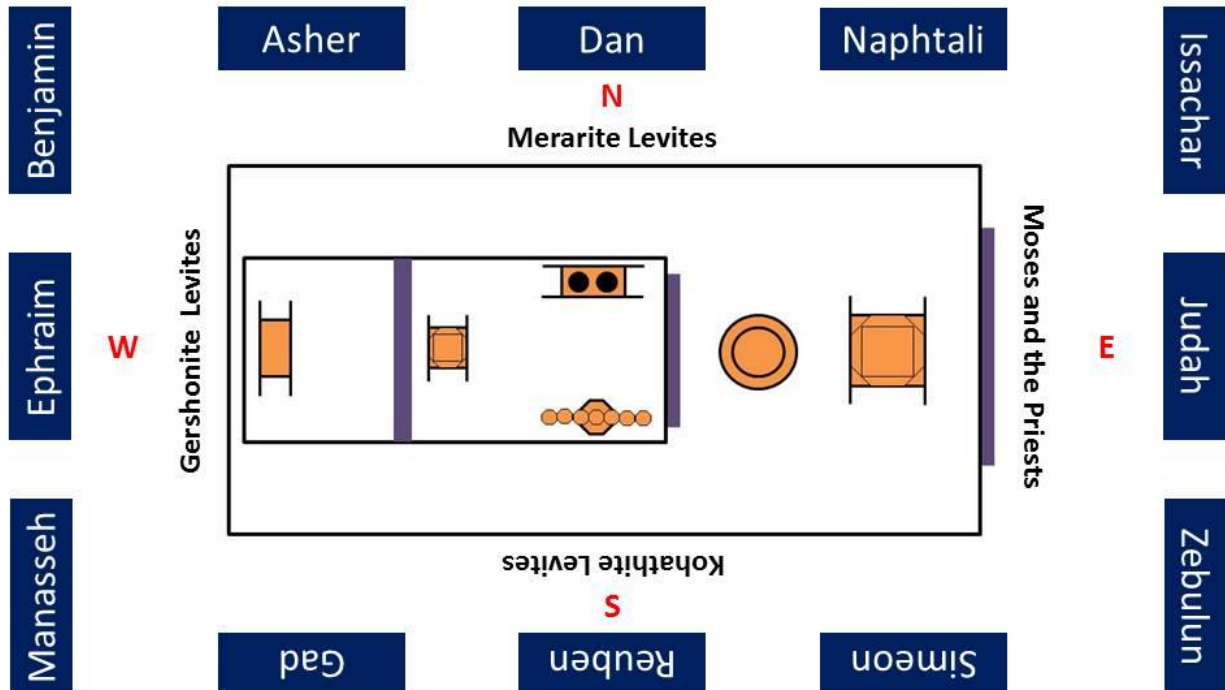
# • LESSON 8 (February 22) •

## The Sacrifices of the Tabernacle

The tabernacle, priesthood, and sacrificial system were built on a precious promise of the God who had delivered the descendants of Abraham from their bondage in Egypt.

“There I will meet with the people of Israel, and [the tabernacle] shall be sanctified by my glory. I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar. Aaron also and his sons I will consecrate to serve me as priests. I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.” (Exo 29:43-46)

The people came to see just how literally the LORD intended to dwell among them in Numbers 2-3. “The people of Israel shall camp each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers’ houses. They shall camp facing the tent of meeting on every side” (Num 2:2).



The tabernacle was the centerpiece of life with the LORD. What enabled an unholy people to dwell in such close proximity to a perfectly holy God? Sacrifices.

Open a Bible and carefully read the LORD's instructions in Leviticus 17:1-14.

- Why do you think the LORD was so explicit in commanding that sacrifices be brought to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and not be offered “in the open field”?
- What should we make of Leviticus 17:7?
- “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life” (Lev 17:11). What does this tell us about the nature, significance, and necessity of Old Testament sacrifices? Why would the author of Hebrews 9:22 go so far as to say “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins”?

In Leviticus 1-7, the LORD outlines five sacrificial “offerings” (literally, *something that is brought near*) that could be presented on his altar for various reasons from among the people.

- **Burnt offerings** (Lev 1) – either a bull, small livestock (a sheep or a goat), or a bird; a very costly offering since it would be completely burned up with nothing left. Burnt offerings were made throughout the Old Testament on occasions of thanksgiving, praise, petition, the making of vows, and self-dedication.
  - Why do you think the LORD repeatedly emphasized that the animals offered were to be “without blemish”?
  - Why would the LORD want the offerer to “lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering” and be the one to kill it?
  - After creating such a beautiful, materially-valuable sanctuary, why would the LORD ever want the priests to “throw the blood against the sides of the altar”?

- **Grain offerings** (Lev 2) – typically consisted of fine flour, oil, frankincense, and salt; the priest would burn “a memorial portion” of the offering on the altar and the rest was a means of providing food for the priests. Grain offerings were often offered along with burnt offerings or peace offerings in the Old Testament.
- **Peace offerings** (Lev 3) – presented the possibility of peace or communion between the offerer and the LORD; could consist of cattle, sheep, or goats. Whereas the entire animal was consumed in a burnt offering, the fat and kidneys of a peace offering were presented to the LORD, the priests received a portion for their food (Lev 7:28-36), and what remained went back to the offerers and their families (Deut 12:17-18). Peace offerings came to symbolize a kind of communion meal, a means of affirming a covenant relationship. On occasions ranging from petition to praise, peace offerings were a time to remember and reaffirm one’s covenant relationship with the LORD.
- **Sin offerings** (Lev 4:1-5:13) – cattle, sheep, goats, or birds presented to make amends for a broken relationship with the LORD caused either by unintentionally violating his commandments (4:1-35) or by failing to do something which was required (5:1-13).
  - Note Leviticus 4:5-7. What made this offering different? Why was the blood of a sin offering handled in this way?
- **Guilt offerings** (Lev 5:14-6:7) – appear to have been for offenses more serious (“a breach of faith and unintentional sin in any of the holy things of the LORD”) since the sacrificial animals were to be more costly. Sins against a fellow person also called for a guilt offering (6:1-5).
  - What did the LORD mean when he said the offerer “shall also make restitution for what he has done amiss in the holy thing and shall add a fifth to it and give it to the priest” (5:16)?

By making all of these sacrificial offerings, what were the people of God acknowledging?

Beyond those five offerings that could be initiated by the people according to their need, the LORD also established an “appointed time” for perpetual sacrifices (Num 28:1-2).

| Occasion   | Bulls | Rams | Lambs | Goats |
|--|-------|------|-------|-------|
| Every day (Num 28:3-8)                                   |       |      | 2     |       |
| Every Sabbath (Num 28:9-10)                              |       |      | 2     |       |
| The first day of every month (Num 28:11-15)              | 2     | 1    | 7     | 1     |
| Each day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Num 28:16-25) | 2     | 1    | 7     | 1     |
| The Feast of Weeks (Num 28:26-31)                        | 2     | 1    | 7     | 1     |
| The Feast of Trumpets (Num 29:1-6)                       | 1     | 1    | 7     | 1     |
| The Day of Atonement (Num 29:7-11)                       | 1     | 1    | 7     | 1     |
| The Feast of Booths (Num 29:12-38):                      |       |      |       |       |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> day                                      | 13    | 2    | 14    | 1     |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> day                                      | 12    | 2    | 14    | 1     |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> day                                      | 11    | 2    | 14    | 1     |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> day                                      | 10    | 2    | 14    | 1     |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> day                                      | 9     | 2    | 14    | 1     |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> day                                      | 8     | 2    | 14    | 1     |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> day                                      | 7     | 2    | 14    | 1     |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> day                                      | 1     | 1    | 7     | 1     |

#### For further study:

- **The Sabbath (Lev 23:3):** a day of solemn rest every 7<sup>th</sup> day; mimics the rhythm of work and rest rooted in Creation (Exo 20:7-11).
- **The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev 23:4-8):** immediately followed Passover, which was celebrated on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month to commemorate Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage (Exo 12-13).
- **The Feast of Weeks (Lev 23:9-22):** also known as "the Feast of the Harvest" (Exo 23:16) and Pentecost (from the Greek word for "fiftieth"); took place seven weeks after Passover; recognized the LORD as the provider of crops and deserving of the firstfruit of all produce.
- **The Feast of Trumpets (Lev 23:23-25):** every new moon was a holy day (Num 28:11-15), but the seventh month (centered around the Day of Atonement) was the most sacred month of the Hebrew year, making the first day of that month especially holy. Numbers 10:10 associates the blowing of the trumpets with a plea to God to remember Israel.
- **The Day of Atonement (23:26-32):** the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month; Leviticus 16 provides detailed instructions concerning this one day per year on which the high priest was commanded to enter the Most Holy Place and sacrifice for the sins of himself and all the people.
- **The Feast of Booths (Lev 23:33-43):** a weeklong feast that began on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month; involved all Israelites living in booths for the week to remind themselves of their former wandering in the wilderness.

**CLOSING THOUGHT:** "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Rom 12:1).