

'WORSHIP GOD WANTS'

(Portraits of Christ in the Tabernacle)

Studies in Exodus & Leviticus

"Be My Sacrifice"

Around the world, people will be receiving flowers, chocolates, and other sweet gifts for Valentine's Day. Attached cards will often ask, "*Will you be my valentine?*" or the more imperative rendition, "*Be my Valentine*". For some it is a reaffirmation of their love for a spouse, fiancé, or extra special person in their life. To others it's a surprise when they learn of a secret admirer's previously unexpressed romantic feelings.

It may be a blessing for those who accept the *sweet offer* but it may be a very awkward day around the world for many who don't want to be somebody's Valentine. Saying '*I love you*' is risky business if you aren't sure the one you say it to feels the same way. If you say those words, and get an '*Oh, how about that?*' or anything other than '*I love you, too*' back, it can make for a traumatic, instead of romantic day you'll never forget! Maybe that's why so many will mitigate the anxiety by saying it with icing on a cookie, tiny words imprinted on candy, or a card attached to a bunch of flowers. By tomorrow the truth about love will be revealed to many and all we can do is, "***Rejoice with those who rejoice & weep with those who weep***" (***Romans 12:15***)

Telling God '*I love you*' is never risky; you can always know He is saying '*I love you*' back (***1 John 4:9-11***). But your '*I love you, Lord*' card for God must be attached to a sacrificial gift of His choice (***1 John 3:18***). In Old Testament times '*I love you Lord*' had to be attached to special offerings God requested in Leviticus. If you truly loved God and wanted to express it, the right way to do it was clearly explained in Scripture. **5 different sacrificial offerings** were used by worshipers trying to say, '*Forgive me, I love You*'. The way you sent it to God was for it to ascend up in smoke from the tabernacle altar toward heaven. As the sacrifice burned up on earth, it ascended before the Lord as sweet-smelling incense from the person who sent it. True love is always more than just a few nice words. Especially when the Old Testament sacrifices were also a symbolic previews of the ultimate coming '*love Gift*' of God Himself, in the Person of Christ (***Hebrews 10:10-14***).

God's gift of salvation in Christ is still the best test of whether you really love God or not. He has taken the initiative in going first and saying '*I love you, will you be Mine?*' But then comes the dramatic part of seeing whether you will say back to Him, '*I love you too, Lord, and accept Your Gift of eternal life in the Lord Jesus*'. Of course, your spiritually romantic words must be attached to the gift God has asked for – your promise of repentance, faith, dedication and worship.

God never asked for religious ashes (*Ash Wednesday*) or pathetic personal sacrifices (*Lent*). He has told us the only acceptable gift that proves we love Him and belong to Him is accepting the Lord Jesus Christ's ***finished*** work on the cross for our sins and believing in His glorious resurrection. Those who truly love Him get a living, personal relationship with Him through Jesus (***John 14:6***). The romance of redemption is simple, personal and eternal for all who truly repent, believe and say to the Lord, "***Will You be my Savior?***" (***Romans 10:9-13***) *PtL*

5 Sacrifices for the Love of Your Life

Leviticus 1-7

*"... (if the OT sacrifices could ceremonially cleanse outwardly) how much more shall **the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.** And for this reason He is the Mediator of the New Covenant..."* **Hebrews 9:11-15**

The bronze altar: Made of acacia wood covered with bronze plating symbolizing Christ's physical humanity and His authority to judge. The size of 5 cubits x 5 cubits is symbolic of both tables of the 10 Commandments. 3 cubits high reflected the Triune God's participation in judging sin borne by Christ on the cross. 4 horns on each corner indicated God's way of sacrifice and atonement is available to everyone everywhere on earth (*North, South, East & West*). *The NT altar is the Lord Jesus* (***Hebrews 13:10-14***).

Suitable sacrifices:

- 1) *bullock or ox*, 2) *sheep or lamb*, 3) *goat*, 4) *turtledove*, 5) *young pigeon*

All illustrated aspects of Christ our sacrifice: bull - strong & powerful Savior; sheep or lamb - meekness & submission; goat - our sin-bearing substitute; turtledove or pigeon - faithfulness & poverty (***Hebrews 10:1-4***)

The 3 ‘Sweet Savor’ Offerings:

The Burnt Offering

(Atonement / Leviticus 1:3-17; 6:8-13)

A male bull without blemish was offered-- slain and burned up completely except for the skin which was the priest's. This is the primary and initial sacrifice that prefigured the total sacrifice by God of His servant Son, the sinless Lord Jesus Christ who gave Himself for our sins. Without this sacrifice of blood on the altar and the burnt offering, no one was permitted further progress to the tabernacle (*Hebrews 9:14*)

Christians no longer need to offer burned sacrifices to God; Christ has done it once and for all at the altar of the cross and His personal ascension into heaven. Now, believers' prayers of praise and thanksgiving rise to the Lord as sweet incense (*Hebrews 13:5, 1 Peter 2:5, Revelation 5:8*).

- Talk about how our worship should always start with thanks and praise for our Savior and our salvation, before proceeding into other things we do in worship.

The Grain (Meal) Offering

(Dedication / Leviticus 2:1-16; 6:14-23)

The only bloodless offering, grain (fine flour), oil poured upon it with frankincense. Some offered to God and some to the priest. Baked as an unleavened cake or wafers anointed with oil. Another picture of Christ as our Savior/Provider Who gives us all good things to enjoy and worship God.

Like the '**Lord's Prayer**' (*Matthew 6:11*), acknowledgment and thanks to the Lord for His provision of all things is appropriate and right.

- Talk about how remembering all things we have for life, are because of the blessings they are in Christ.
- Discuss how daily dedication to the Lord in serving, giving and witnessing we are sending up a sweet-smelling fragrance to God (*James 1:17, Philippians 4:17-18*).

The Peace Offering

(Reconciliation / Leviticus 3:1-17; 7:11-36)

A sacrifice of the flock symbolizing Christ, the Prince of Peace, Whose offering on the altar of the cross procured peace with God, peace of God within and peace from God with others.

- Discuss how a *peace offering prayer* accompanying something that's bothering you or when the Lord is moving you to seek peaceful reconciliation with a brother/sister in Christ is sure to help (*Philippians 4:6-7*).

The 2 ‘Unsweet Savor’ Offerings

The Sin Offering

(Propitiation (satisfaction) / Leviticus 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30)

A sacrifice for sins committed in ignorance or omission against God and others. This was especially for offenses for which restitution could not be made (*if the person moved or died or the sin was an unexpressed thought or wrong feeling, etc.*) or uncleanness resulting in contact with or involvement in something wrong before God. This sacrifice proves that although unintentional, such sins are still offensive to our holy God and Savior Who had to die for all sins, including those not horribly wicked and/or premeditated.

- What kind of offenses or unintentionally sinful situations can you think of that are not terribly serious, but are wrong just the same and need forgiveness? (*Ephesians 5:2-3, 1 John 1:9*) What kind of prayer should ascend to God from us as a *sin offering*?

The Trespass Offering

(Repentance / Leviticus 5:14-6:7; 7:1-10)

Sacrifice for sins against God and others that were deliberate, premeditated disobedience into some area of life that was none of your business. Trespassing sinfully upon God's law or other people's personal lives and rights required Christ's substitutionary death to atone for all willful disobedience.

- What kind of evil, wickedness, or iniquity would qualify as needing a *trespass offering*?
- Discuss the seriousness of failing to deal with *trespasses* according to **Matthew 6:14-15**. It is good to know that Christ is our *trespass offering* for the selfish, shameful things we do, say, or think. *Psalms 51*, David's prayer after adultery, is a good *no trespassing prayer*.