Objectives:

1. To understand the context of the prescribed sacrificial system.
2. To understand the purpose of the sacrificial system.
3. To understand the Christological symbolism of the sacrificial system.
4. To understand the Soteriological symbolism of the sacrificial system.

Introduction:

I am convinced during this season it is imperative for the church to understand “A holy God requires a holy people”. It is important for the church to understand, that it has been gathered and summoned to be a distinct people. The one living and true God has called His people out of darkness, granting new life as children of light. The study of Leviticus will refresh the church’s recollection of God’s holiness and the call for her, the church, to be holy.

I. Leviticus and the Pentateuch

A. Leviticus is the third book of the Pentateuch.
B. The Pentateuch is the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
C. The Pentateuch is also known as the five books of Moses.
D. Genesis details the beginnings of creation including the beginning of God’s covenant people.
E. Exodus details God’s deliverance of His covenant people from the bondage of slavery.
F. Leviticus is a book of instructions on how to worship and live in fellowship with God, who is holy.
G. Numbers chronicles God’s covenant people’s experiences in the wilderness.
H. Deuteronomy focuses on obedience and loyalty; “A covenant keeping God, requires a covenant keeping people”.

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2 Hanna, 98.
I. Leviticus binds Genesis and Exodus with Numbers and Deuteronomy.

J. These five books are also known as the Torah.

K. Torah is the Hebrew word, tora, meaning law/instruction.

L. The title Leviticus comes from the Greek Septuagint.

M. Leviticus, is the translation of the Greek adjective, Leuitikon.

N. Leuitikon means pertaining to the Levites.

O. The Levites were assigned the priestly duties.

P. The Aaronic Priesthood were descendants from the tribe of Levi.

Q. Although the book only mentions the Levites by name once in 25:32-33, the book primarily deals with instructions and duties of the priests.

R. The Jews title the book, wayyiqrā’, meaning “and he called”, referring to the often statement, the Lord spoke to Moses.

S. Through Moses, God taught the covenant people how to approach Him, as well as how to have fellowship with Him.

II. Various Sacrificial Theories

A. Sacrifices have existed since the dawn of human history.

B. Several theories have developed in an attempt to explain the human motivation for offering sacrifices.

C. The Gift Theory holds that sacrifices were offered to deities, in order to establish good relations with the gods and of securing favors.3

D. The Sacramental-Communion Theory is a totemistic view wherein an animal which supposedly shared in the divine nature was eaten. Upon partaking of this animal, one would assimilate the divine qualities by consuming the animal.4

E. The Table Bond Theory involves a sacrificial meal shared between the offerer and the offerers gods in an effort to have fellowship with each other.5

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4 Ibid.

F. The Homage Theory holds that the sacrifice is offered to the deity to show dependence and respect. However, the sacrifice is offered without a sense of guilt on the part of the offerer.\(^6\)

G. The Piacular Theory proposes that the sacrifices were offered as expiatory or atoning on the part for sins committed by the offerer.\(^7\)

H. The Piacular view is most aligned with what we see in Scripture.

I. In Genesis 3:21: “The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.”

J. Here God sacrificed an animal to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve.

K. We see sacrifices in the first acts of worship mentioned in Genesis 4:3-5:

\[
\text{So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. 4 Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering; 5 but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard.}
\]

L. Noah offered a sacrifice upon departing the ark in Genesis 8:20-21:

\[
\text{Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 21 The Lord smelled the soothing aroma.}
\]

M. Although Genesis does not go in detail explaining the sacrifice, the intended audience would understand sacrifices because they would have been familiar with the instruction in Leviticus.

N. It is important to note the act of Levitical sacrifices, “were not intended to establish a personal or corporate (salvific) relationship with (God).”\(^8\)

O. Redemption for the covenant people of God was always expressed through faith.

P. Genesis 15:6 states speaking of Abraham, “Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.”\(^9\)

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\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^7\) Berkhof, 363.
\(^8\) Ibid.
Q. Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 in Romans 4:3.
S. In other words, the sacrifices alone were not expiatory.
T. Faith was and is always required for Divine righteousness, i.e justification.
U. However, the sacrificial system provided a means for the people to “maintain covenantal fellowship” with God.

### III. The Role of Leviticus to the New Testament

A. I submit, one can not fully appreciate the wonders contained in the New Testament references to Christ if one does not have a sufficient familiarity with the book of Leviticus.
B. In Romans 8:1-4 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, Christ is the fulfillment of the Levitical sin offering.¹⁰
C. In Romans 5:1–11, Ephesians 2:13–18 and Colossians 1:18–20, Christ is described as a peace offering.¹¹
D. I also submit, understanding the Book of Leviticus is foundational to understanding the Book of Hebrews.
E. Hebrews 7 speaks of Christ’s priesthood being eternally superior to the Levitical order.
F. Hebrews 10:1 states “For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.”
G. The shadow in Hebrews 10:1 refers to the Levitical sacrifices and rituals spoken of in the book of Leviticus.
H. A shadow is an image representing something real.
I. The sacrificial system in Leviticus 1-7 is a shadow of Christ.

### IV. Authorship

A. Both Christian and Hebrew traditions have ascribed authorship to Moses.¹²

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¹¹ Ibid.
¹² Ibid.
B. However, you will find critical scholars attributing the Pentateuch as a final product of more than one author, having been revised and complied over centuries.

C. Critical scholars assert the final product of the Pentateuch is the work product of a editor or editors. ¹³

D. You will find a multiple source view argument among liberal scholars, sometimes referred to the scholarly position, i.e JEDP.

E. Dr. James Allman asserts referring to the JEDP:

*The (J) Yahwist first gathered the patriarchal traditions and edited them into a single work in the ninth or tenth century B.C. In the eighth century, a second redactor, the (E) Elohist, gathered more traditions from the oral stories available in his day and edited them together with the already existing Yahwistic redaction. Then in the seventh century, the (D) Deuteronomist prepared his document (largely the book of Deuteronomy) to support and further Josiah’s reforms, especially Josiah’s emphasis on the one central sanctuary in Jerusalem. In the sixth century, the (P) Priestly group redacted all of the existing material inserting their own interests in genealogies and temple ritual, preserving the material they feared would be lost during the Babylonian exile.*⁴

F. However, Mosaic authorship was generally uncontested until 1750.

G. Although the book of Leviticus does not specifically state Moses as the author, a careful external, internal and historical analysis will confirm Mosaic authorship.

H. It is clear the book is written from an eye witness point of view.

I. Moses’ name is mentioned eighty times.¹⁵

J. Jesus ascribes ownership to Moses on Matthew 8:3-4;

*Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus *said to him, “See that you tell no one;*

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¹² Hanna, 15.
¹³ Hannah, 15.
¹⁵ Hannah, 68.
but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

J. Luke referring to Jesus presentation at the Temple, comments:

And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord

V. The Structure and Theme of Leviticus

Leviticus

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<td>1-7</td>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>18-27</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A. Leviticus is grounded in a framework that resembled primarily a set of statutes and codes mandated by God for holy living.

B. However, the book of Leviticus also contains a foundational theme of forgiveness.

C. The prescription of forgiveness based upon a sacrificial system runs through the text of Leviticus.18

D. In the first section, The Sacrificial Code, Chapters 1-7, God sets forth the guidelines and procedures for the sacrificial system.

E. The remedy for the presence of sin corporately and individually is stated.

F. This remedy is grounded in animal sacrifices, wherein the animal becomes the symbolic agent of propitiation.19

G. In the second section, The Priestly Code, chapters 8-10, God gives instructions which contains the consecration and ordination of Aaron and his sons.

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H. The instructions are specific to the priests regarding their obligations.\textsuperscript{20}

I. This section also includes the consequences for failing to adhere to God's instruction.

J. The fourth section Guidelines for Atonement, chapters 16-17, outlines the instructions for the most significant day in the Israelite calendar where the previous year’s sin was atoned.\textsuperscript{21}


L. Within this section God continues the instructions on holy living which also includes warnings that involve blessings and curses.

M. Holiness is mandated for the individual as well as the entire nation as a corporate body.

VI. The Sacrificial Offerings (1-7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Offering</th>
<th>Scripture Reference</th>
<th>Purpose of Offering</th>
<th>The Offering</th>
<th>Disposition (Result of Offering)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burnt Offering</td>
<td>Leviticus 1, 6:8-13 Romans 12 \textit{(living sacrifice)}</td>
<td>Worship and Atoning Sacrifice</td>
<td>Unblemished Male, Turtle Dove or Pigeon</td>
<td>Completely Consumed by Fire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grain Offering</td>
<td>Leviticus 2, 6:14-23 Romans 12 \textit{(living sacrifice)}</td>
<td>Tribute, Giving Thanks</td>
<td>Unleavened Salted Cakes or Grains</td>
<td>A portion burned with the remainder to priests</td>
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<td>Peace Offering</td>
<td>Leviticus 3, Hebrews 7:11-21 13:15-16 \textit{(sacrifice of praise)}</td>
<td>Fellowship</td>
<td>Unblemished male or female animal, the most the worshiper could afford</td>
<td>Fat, liver, kidneys burned; remainder eaten by priest and worshipper in fellowship meal”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sin Offering</td>
<td>Leviticus 4, 6:24-30</td>
<td>Cleansing for Unintentional/Accidental Sins</td>
<td>Bull (priest or congregation); male goat (ruler); female goat, lamb, pair of doves or pigeons; meal offering (individual)</td>
<td>“Fat burned for God; remainder eaten by priests” (Harrison)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
| Guilt Offering | Leviticus 5: 6:1-7; 7:1-7, plus reparations | Cleansing for Sins Committed against other persons or the Sanctuary | A female lamb or goat could be brought or two turtledoves or two young pigeons (depending on means) | “Fat burned for God; remainder eaten by priests” (Harrison) |


A. There are five sacrifices spoken of in Leviticus 1-7.
B. Leviticus 1 details the Bunt Offering.
C. Here the whole offering is consumed.
D. Here is a symbol of Christ’s willingness to surrender Himself on the cross.22
E. Leviticus 2 details the Grain Offering.
F. The Grain Offering pointed to the people’s giving of thanks, bearing witness to God’s sovereignty.23
G. Leviticus 3 gives instruction regarding the Peace Offering.
H. The Peace Offering is a symbol Christ being the source to Divine peace.
I. Christ’s atoning work allows us to have the peace of God, by having peace with God, having been reconciled by faith in Christ’s work.24
J. Leviticus 4 details the Sin Offering.
K. The Sin Offering is cleansing and atoning for unintentional sins.
L. There are times wherein we sin in ignorance.
M. The Guilt Offering symbolizes the power of Christ who satisfies and is the reparation for our sins.

VII. The Shadow of Good Things to Come
A. The meaning of the sacrificial system is communicated through rituals.
B. Rituals in themselves are meaningless.

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22 Levy
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
C. The values of rituals are illuminated when the intended symbolism is understood.

D. When rituals are not understood, the ritual’s value is lost.

E. Rituals are designed to communicate and preserve values.

F. Rituals utilize three levels of learning: visual learning, auditory learning, and kinesthetic learning.

G. In other words, rituals involve seeing, hearing and physical activity.

H. The rituals in the Levitical Sacrificial System, are intended to communicate the Biblical theological value of holiness.

I. The burnt, grain and peace offerings were the sweet offerings.

J. The sweet offerings are described as a soothing aroma.

K. The burnt, grain and peace offerings were soothing as they were a shadow of Christ’s voluntary, willingness to give his life.

L. In Ephesians 5:2, Paul admonishes the church at Ephesus, “walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”

M. The sin and guilt offerings are non-sweet offerings.

N. The sin and guilt offerings are non-soothing because they are associated with sin. They typify Christ bearing the sin and shame of mankind on the cross.

O. All of the offerings, the law, are mere shadows of the light of Jesus Christ.

P. What the law could not do, Christ accomplished.

Romans 8:1-3

1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin⁴⁵