

Christ in the Sacrifices 16-01-03b

Let's resume our study now, we're looking at the Offerings of Leviticus, chapters one through five and a half, and we've covered thoroughly once again in our review the ola, and we closed the first session with a question, just sort of a free, no charge, bonus question. How is it that Saul's ola is illegitimate and essentially is the straw that costs him the kingdom when he offers it by himself without Samuel, and yet Samuel is not a son of Aaron, he is instead of the tribe of Ephraim. So how does that work? You say, well, so what's your answer by the way? Is it that Hannah brought him down and dedicated him to the Lord and he's raised by the priest and so that makes it okay? Well, is there any provision in the law that the Levites can make a priest by adoption? No, there isn't.

And Samuel is not so much noted for being a priest as he is a prophet, right? So how does this work? Why is it that Saul's offering would have been okay if he had waited for Samuel the Ephraimite to preside over it, but because he offers it, and if he had just waited, isn't this the way when we're trying to be patient before the Lord, and if we would have just been a little bit more patient and waited on the Lord, he would reveal his provision and his solution to our problems, but we just run out of faith. Well here's my suggestion about that. It's no accident that of the other available twelve tribes that Samuel could have been from other than Levi, it is the tribe of Ephraim.

Where does the tribe of Ephraim come from? It is a tribe that is basically a half-tribe belonging to Joseph. How did Ephraim come to be? What's the story back there in the end of Genesis? There's the crossing of the hands. Is Ephraim the older or the younger son? He is the younger son, but Jacob crosses his hands in the blessing and puts him first.

This is the tribe, a Joseph tribe, Joseph being a spectacular, galactically significant picture of the Lord Jesus Christ in almost every detail of his life, and here are the sons of Joseph, the sons representing the future, and so there is a prophetic element in the disposition of these sons in the blessing of Jacob that basically attaches to Joseph. So what would normally be expected to come first in the future of Joseph by the crossing of the hands is made second, and what would have come second is now first. So, Ephraim, which was the second, now becomes the first, and the first, who would have been? Whom? Manasseh.

Ephraim and Manasseh, right? Manasseh was the firstborn, but he's pushed to second place, and you can say, well, Ephraim must have been more faithful, God liked him better, but it doesn't say any of that. It is simply the order being reversed. Here's my suggestion, and it ties into the significance of Samuel in the Saul sacrifice story, 1 Samuel chapter 13.

The Lord Jesus, being pictured by Joseph, ideally what would have happened when he came the first time? The fact that Joseph is split into two tribes instead of just having a tribe of Joseph indicates or suggests or foreshadows the two-fold aspect of the Lord Jesus in his coming to the earth, his two comings, if you will. What should have happened when he came the first time?

We know from John 1, he came unto his own, and his own received him gloriously, and in him came the millennial kingdom, and here we are ever after. It didn't work that way, did it? What should have happened, the Manasseh ending, if you will, is that he would have come, and as the son of David, as the firstborn Manasseh would have inherited all of his blessings from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through Joseph, that gets displaced.

Instead, what was second, which is the son who in a sense suffers, he's got to go out and make his own way, much as Esau did when he got displaced by Jacob, is there no blessing left for me? Sure, you can be a wild ass of a man, and you can go out and roam the hills, and you'll have the plenty, but it's the dew of heaven that's going to fall on you, and it's a whole different thing. That was the lot by design of the one who didn't get the rulership and the double portion and all of the other blessings that fell upon the firstborn in that patriarchal system. So there is this swap, and instead the second happens first, and so the Lord Jesus when he comes the first time doesn't have the kingdom and the double portion and the rulership and all of the other things that pertain, he gets the Ephraim.

What should have come to Ephraim, that gets pushed up first, and what should have come to Manasseh is now pushed second, and that is going to be his second coming. Now in the Ephraim mode, this is the imperfect mode, this is what incorporates and anticipates human failure, and human rejection, and human folly, and human faithlessness. So how is Samuel functioning as a priest before the Lord in the temple with Eli, and Hophni, and Phinehas? Why is he even there? Well, what kind of priests are Hophni and Phinehas? They're complete and utter rascals, and they end up being killed for their egregious abuse of office.

Well, Eli falls over backward like Humpty Dumpty upon the news, and so now who's left of the priesthood? Apparently Eli, and Hophni, and Phinehas are the last of anybody in the tribe of Levi that's even interested, as the sons of Aaron, in performing the priesthood. There's nobody left but Samuel. As is the case so many other times in the Bible where there is a deficit, God will fill it with someone who has a heart of faithfulness transcending the rules.

Deborah becomes the general, and the prophetess, and the leader in Israel, and it's not a woman's office. There are many cases of exceptional service based on faith. We recently reviewed the case of Ruth, the Moabitess, and we saw the curse on anybody from Moab coming into the assembly or coming before the Lord in any of that, but that is all abrogated because of her faith.

Name in the Syrian isn't even an Israelite, but the rules are bent, and there is accommodation made for him because he's a man of faith, newfound faith, legitimate faith, and this is what God is looking for. It is the heart of faith. This is why God says, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and truth and faith more than the fat of lambs.

So that's my answer to why Samuel is recognized by God as the officiating priest, although he's not a son of Aaron, he's not even in the tribe of Levi. But in a strange way, Samuel also anticipates, as a member of the tribe of Ephraim, the truth of the Lord. And so, there is a lot of

trouble that will pertain in Israel.

It pertained in Samuel's day. We saw it in the Ebenezer story. We saw it in the days of Saul.

And you see it in the days of the Lord Jesus, where there is such a lack of obedience and a lack of understanding. There is a flash of turning to God, as in the days of the There's a flash of return and belief and faith in the days of the Lord Jesus, those who respond, those who get it. But it isn't enough to change the fate of the nation.

And you see that throughout the history of Israel. So that offering was an olah that Saul offered. And it was illegitimate because he did it himself in the same way that later on you have other kings try to go in and perform a priestly function.

There's a separation between the kingly function and the priestly function. It doesn't become united until you get to the Lord Jesus himself. Well that brings us to chapter 2 now, although one last thing.

What does the priest come away with after the olah is over? He has done his part in placing the pieces on the altar and ensuring that the offerer does what he's supposed to do. But when all is said and done and the offering is complete and the offerer has gone away, what is the tangible leftover to the priest from the olah? It isn't mentioned in chapter 1, but you remember there's a two-fold coverage. You have the focus on the offerer in chapter 1 through the first part of chapter 6 and then picking up in 6.8 and going through 7.36, you have the priestly review of those same sacrifices.

Remember that? There's kind of a double coverage. The offerer's instructions are largely focused on in the first five and a half chapters and then for the next chapter and a half you have the priests and some of their particulars. And there you discover that the skin of the olah goes to the priest.

They come away with the hide. And this is partly a significance in the sense that the exterior proof of the holiness and the unblemished nature of the sacrifice is evidenced. If somebody comes by two days later and says, well, I don't think that was an unblemished offering, they've got the hide to prove that it was.

There is this visible portion of the animal that remains afterward and I think it speaks in part of the record of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Word of God that continues on. The hide can be tanned and preserved and last for generations. We've got leather goods going back to the pyramids.

They find tanned leather and it can last a long time properly cared for. And that skin, which is the proof of the holiness and the qualification of that whole burnt offering, is preserved and maintained by the priest. That's I think the idea.

So, and then finally you remember the different scales. It's virtually identical if it comes from

the flock as if it comes from the herd, but when you get to the birds it's entirely different. You remember that this could either be a pigeon or a dove.

They're both from the same family and they are identically treated, but it's different in the sense that the priest does almost everything. When the offerer brings this dove or pigeon, the one thing the offerer does, the first thing that happens is the head, once again the significance of the head as initiative and decision and the sense of purpose, the head is first wrung off of the bird and it is placed on the altar and burnt first. Before anything else happens, the bird's head is wrung off and burnt on the altar.

Then the offerer takes the feathers and the crop. So the offerer plucks the bird and takes the crop, the innards, and those go to the ash heap. Remember my diagram of the tabernacle and temple precinct there and to the east of the altar and off center a little bit, no doubt, was the ash heap near the gate so that those ashes could from time to time be taken out and disposed of, otherwise you have a giant ash mountain that would dwarf the tabernacle and everything else.

But they were near the eastern gate and off center from it. So the offerer would pluck the feathers, this is the outer covering, and the crop, this is the innards of the bird and whatever it ate. Now why would that be taken out and disposed of in the ash heap instead of why wouldn't you just put the whole bird on there and send it up feathers and guts and all? Think about this, a domesticated animal such as the, remember the entrails of the herd and flock animals were included in what is sent to God.

We know what they ate, right? They are herd and flock animals, they have been managed and maintained and they have been taken to green pastures beside the still waters. You know what's inside their innards, so to speak. But these birds, what have they been eating? Who knows what? I used to keep chickens and they would eat anything that moved on the ground.

What we really liked is they ate ticks, but they would eat beetles and bugs and all kinds of crawling things and worms. You just don't know what they have been eating. And because it's not the green grass watered by the dew of heaven and the rains and the waters and so on, you don't know what's in there and it's possibly unclean, that's removed.

The feathers are the outer covering, and you would think, well, wouldn't this be when you give the feathers to the priest, they could make pillows out of them or something. They might have some use for the feathers. But those are also taken and discarded, why? The essence of the bird is its body.

And you remember, we think of the bird as representing deity in the way that the doves represent the Holy Spirit. Doves were known for their docility, they were never combative. Jesus said you should be harmless as doves.

Even when they're attacked, they don't fight back, they're known for their passive and congenial

nature. You just don't, oh, doctor, repair me and stitch up my face, I was attacked by a dove. It just doesn't happen.

So that's why they become an emblem of peace and so on. But in Scripture and in the sacrificial system, as we mentioned before, the poor, ironically, and in a reverse expectation, have the chance to reflect the highest anticipation of the Lord Jesus, which is his deity. And no man has seen God at any time.

And when you're looking at the feathers, you're not really seeing deity, you're seeing an external cover that is necessarily not quite a corruption, but it is a diminishment. It is an appearance that doesn't do justice to what's inside. And it doesn't qualify, and you don't need to send deity to God, he already is deity.

So it doesn't go up in the olah. That covering, which is sort of for man's benefit, so that you can see the thing, it makes the invisible visible and so on. And the crop are set aside, they're put in the ash heap, and the bird is split, it's divided as though to show that it is clean inside and out.

It is held by the wings, which are its identifying feature as a bird. Birds have wings, and so it is identified, and then it is laid on the altar. But the head already went first, because it is the invisible volition and intentionality and planning and purposefulness of the mind that is first and foremost in view.

That's why the head of the bull and the head of the animal from the flock, the ram or the male sheep, is placed on top. And then the glory covering of the fat transcends it all, and that's God's portion. So that's the olah.

But the skin of the herd and flock animals goes to the priest. And this is a lasting, tangible, if you will, reminder of that sacrifice. It continues, and it is in the hands of the priest.

And there's an anticipation that there will be a responsibility for those who communicate and those who superintend worship to memorialize the sacrifice, to remember it, and to testify to its perfection. Chapter two, the minkah, the grain offering. Minkah means gift.

Olah, that which ascends, it has to do, similar to the verb alah, to go up. This is where the Muslim corruption of deity gets its name, alah, they just sort of double the L, and he's the one that is on high. In Arabic, it has the rough equivalent of the most high.

Olah, and then minkah, the gift, the grain offering. First time we see this is previous to the whole burnt offering. This is in Genesis chapter four, verses three through five.

Cain and Abel, their offering was actually a minkah, it was a gift to God, and as such, a freewill, voluntary offering. Cain wasn't trying to cover over his sins, he wasn't trying to get atonement for his wrongdoings by offering his tossed salad, vegetable sacrifice. The minkah is in fact a grain offering, and you think, well, what's so wrong with what Cain did? Well, remember the conversation God has with him, if you do well, will you not be accepted? But if not, sin lies

crouching at the door.

Well, his problem was, he did not do well, and it wouldn't matter what sacrifice he brought, it was his intentionality that was faulty. What was the purpose? I stated it real clearly in the first session, what was the purpose of the olah? That the offerer might be what? Accepted. It will be accepted, he will be accepted.

What did God say to Cain? If you do well, will you not be accepted? You can be accepted when you offer a minkah, you can be accepted when you offer an olah, but if you do not do well, read Malachi, it doesn't matter what sacrifice you bring. David will talk about this later on in the Psalms, if you desired sacrifice, I would bring it, but you desire the sacrifice of praise, you desire the sacrifice of a contrite heart and a pure spirit. Minkah, grain offering, gift, Genesis 4, the first instance of it, and it begins in Leviticus chapter 2 by saying, any soul, any nephesh that brings one of these shall do it in the following way.

When any soul offers a grain offering to the Lord, and then you remember, and I'm going to go through this one a little more quickly. You remember the three kinds of grain offering? You had first of all the fine flour, with oil, and then frankincense, he brings it to the priest, and the offerer pours the oil on it. The offerer puts the frankincense on it.

There is an involvement, there is an investment on the part of the offerer in all of these sacrifices. You don't just bring a barrel of flour and a jug of oil and a little bottle of frankincense powdered to the priest and say, okay, get her done. The offerer is involved.

When he brings the animal, he's the one that lays his hand on it. He's the one that slays it. He's the one that skins it.

He's the one that divides the pieces. He's intimately involved in this. It is a performance of duty that involves action and involves a cost.

It's a cost in time. It's a cost in mental dedication. I don't think anybody wakes up in the morning and says, boy, I'd sure love to chop an animal up and take its life and incinerate it.

There's a cost. There's an investment. But the three different kinds.

The first one was fine flour, flour ground very fine. We know that this represents work. It takes work to grind flour.

It takes work to grow the grain before you can even grind it. The grain needs to be all the same kind of grain. You don't mash up a bunch of weeds and detritus in it.

It should be a grain that is pure and has been separated out and carefully analyzed. Be sure all that you have in there is grain and then you grind it into flour and it's pure flour, fine flour. You put the oil on it, the frankincense, and the priest burns it as a memorial on the altar.

Made by fire, sweet aroma to the Lord. The rest of it, this time in the ola, the priest retains the

skin. What does the priest retain here? The remainder, the bulk of the fine flour.

So now the priest has the skins as a memorial and as a tangible reminder and something useful to him from the ola. Now he's got fine flour from this offering. If it's a baked cake, beginning in verse 4, then we saw that.

It's unleavened. By the way, the thing about leaven, and you'll see people all the time saying, well, leaven, come see, come saw. Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad.

Jesus said the kingdom is like leaven. In my opinion, leaven is always bad. It's always bad.

But let me ask you this question. If I'm correct in that, and that's a third class if, maybe yes, maybe no. But let's say that leaven is always bad.

Why is it that at the Feast of Firstfruits, they do incorporate leavened bread into the sacrifice? Leaven is brought. At the one time when leavened stuff is okay is at the Feast of Firstfruits. And of course, every day in their household, they eat leavened bread.

That's why they had to go purge out the leaven during Passover. They had to go find it and sweep the house, and they've got a big rigmarole ritual they do now to get the little kids and have them hunt all through the house and make sure there's nothing defiling. Because the rest of the time, the house had leaven, and there was leavened dough.

Leaven was the normal thing. Unleavened bread at Passover was because they were in haste. If they had more time, it would have been leavened bread.

So why is leaven so consistently associated with evil and with evil permeating a thing? A little leaven leavens the whole lump. And by the way, bread is much easier to digest, and it's more appealing when it is leavened. Would you rather eat a flat cracker type of bread to make your sandwich, or would you rather have something with a little bit of puffiness to it? Your biscuits, your rolls, your sandwich breads, your French breads, your croissants, and all the rest of it.

You like them to have some puffiness. You don't want this. When the thing falls, we had some biscuits over the holidays that they sat too long, and they were rising, but they were on a warm oven, and they fell.

And they were like little pucks, little solid things, solid disks. It wasn't bad, but I did notice a tangible difference in the overall experience of eating it. You know, butter, you could eat your own shoe soles, and it would be okay if you put enough butter on it.

But they were much different. So I'm back to my question now. What's the deal on leaven? Normally, God didn't say, Thou shalt never eat any leaven, because leaven is a picture of sin.

But at certain times, it's forbidden, and in the sacrifice it's forbidden. What's the deal with leaven? And especially, why is it okay at first fruits? And why is it okay in a normal Israelite household? Here's my suggestion. There is an inherent and inevitable presence of corruption in

the earth.

We are conceived in, what, iniquity, and we are born in, what, sin. We move through this earth, and when you walk around in your bare feet or in your sandals, what's going to happen to your feet? They get dirty. We don't have, God doesn't say, Behold, in the precincts of Israel you will pave everything over so that no dust shall cling to your feet, because you shall be holy, for I am holy.

God knows that we're going to dirty our feet. The Lord Jesus said, I'm washing your feet, you should wash each other's feet. It is an inevitability, because we are fallen people in a fallen world.

And in the first fruits, there is a recognition that even with all of the grace of God in bringing this life out of the ground and bringing bounty and nourishment and the rest of it, it is inevitably sown with some potential for corruption. And the more something swells, the more likely it is to be permeated with evil. This is why the biblical model for church is small groups.

The church in your house, the church in her house, the church in his house. Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the church in their house. Greet these guys and the church in their house.

The smaller it is, the less the leaven can do its swelling, permeating, defiling work. And there is benefit in keeping things modest, keeping things containable, keeping them small, because it is inevitable that there is going to be this. And we have to learn, as the Israelites did, to function in the presence of imperfection, to function in the presence of the leaven that is necessarily a part of life.

When you come before the Lord and you purge it out, this is a recognition of the ideal and the hope that we have, the attainment of the future blessing and ultimate deliverance. We have daily deliverance, but there is an ultimate deliverance when it will be manna. The Lord himself will come girded and serve us manna, manna from heaven.

There is no leaven necessary, not needed. So we talked about leaven, we talked about no honey, because it is again that which costs me nothing. The bees make it.

You just reach out and grab it, it doesn't cost anything. You don't cultivate it, you don't work for it, you don't have to weed it, you don't have to protect it, you don't have to fence it around. In fact, I've told you before, I think it would be fun to be a beekeeper.

I'm going to look into that and see if I can't find a way to keep bees. And we need more because we're running out of bees, they're dying in droves. The bees are dying like flies.

So I think we need more bees and beekeepers and they've got some wonderful new technology for it. But the honey, it was a sweetener, but it was a cheap sweetener. It was easy to obtain.

It didn't cost anything. And it wasn't the product of work. And this whole sacrifice focuses on

the work of your hands, what you bring before the Lord as your endeavor.

And that's the minka. The priest comes away with the grain or the grain product, the cakes or the flour or whatever. And it is a reminder of, by the way, this grain, everything you bring is by the sweat of your brow.

Why do you not bring honey? Or why do you not bring something, you know, land flowing with milk and honey? There's never any milk involved in the sacrifices, never any honey involved in the sacrifices. But these are the bounty of the land. They are good things in and of themselves.

But this is a reflection of God's work. And this sacrifice focuses on man's work. So, the references to what God is looking for, if you turn just real quickly to Matthew 16, verse 6, the Lord Jesus says, Matthew 16, verse 6, Down in that same chapter, verse 10 and 11, Matthew 16, verse 10 and 11, speak to you concerning bread, but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." What is the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees? It is a small thing that left to itself and not purged out will eventually permeate and define the entire lump.

What was that leaven? It was the false doctrine of human works being acceptable in God's sight. It was that works without the right attitude of heart, tithing the spices in the cabinet and missing the larger points of the law which were justice and mercy. If you caught the past Bible classes that aired over the holidays, going back and reviewing the Lord's Table and what that means, it isn't about the meal, it is about the treatment of fellow members of the body of Christ, not discerning the Lord's body.

That is the problem. It is what is going on in our hearts. God owns the cattle on a thousand hills.

He doesn't need somebody incinerating one and sending him the smoke. He is looking for those who have the heart to bring that sacrifice, who have the heart to carefully follow the ordinances involved in that. And by the way, there are very specific procedural rules for these and those rules, when followed, utterly and completely prevent idolatry.

It doesn't get an admixture where I am going to send this part to God and this part to Ashtoreth, this part to God and this part to Baal. I am going to include some things that we do in Baal worship or that we do in other cultic idolatrous practices. These very restrictive and particular rules mean, when you bring a sacrifice, there is one and only one way to do it.

And it doesn't allow for admixture. It doesn't allow for improvisation. It doesn't allow for imagination.

Well, I am going to bring lettuce leaves and sprinkle them on top of my sacrifice. There is one and only one way to do it. The leaven of the Pharisees is including other things in worship and in service and in faith and in practice that do not belong.

And Jesus says, when you look at the feeding of the five thousand and you look at the feeding

of the four thousand, I am telling you, watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. This is success by religious man-made traditions and efforts and success by governmental success. If you think these upcoming elections are going to make any difference to the fate of this country, think again.

It is the leaven of Herod. The thing that will change the fate of the country and our fate within it is spiritual priorities, a heart for God, a heart that will bring the Ola and the Minka and the Shalom and will recognize when there has been sin in the camp and there is a need for the sin offering and the trespass offering. That is why Christ came.

If the Lord Jesus had come to make the world right, He would have set up His government then and there. Don't fall for the leaven of Herod. If the Lord had meant to solve all our problems by multiplying bread in an unlimited fashion and giving us all a bunch of rituals to follow and you are baptized here and it is the Lord's table there and it is holy smoke here and it is veneration and adoration and crawling up steps and all the rest of it, He would have incorporated that.

What did He say? My kingdom is not of this world. It is not material. It is immaterial.

Your sacrifices are the sacrifice of a pure heart and a contrite spirit. Romans 12, 1 and 2. So these material sacrifices in Leviticus are a reminder and a daily guide. It is the field manual.

It is the standard operating procedure for how to live our lives. If we could get up every morning and just think through these five sacrifices and gear our minds, gird up the loins of our mind to worship God and serve God in this way, we will bear fruit that is reflecting the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and is a pleasing aroma to God the Father. We will close here in a word of prayer.

We will continue our study. We will finish our review and move forward in Leviticus toward the conclusion of our study next week. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word.

Thank You for the blessings that we receive as we reflect on the work of the Lord Jesus and the beauty of the pictures of His character and His dedication to You as we find it in these pages. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress them on our hearts, make them a source of motivation and challenge to us in the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.