



The Exodus

Lesson 12: The Sacrifices And Holy Days

(Leviticus 1-7, 16, 22-23, 25; Numbers 15, 18, 28-29)

Under the Law of Moses, God told Israel that He wanted them to offer sacrifices to Him on the altar. Whenever they would obey God's commands and make sacrifices to Him, He would be pleased. Until Jesus Christ would come to earth, this was also necessary in order for God to forgive their sins. But, whenever Jesus came and offered Himself as a sacrifice, all these other sacrifices would no longer be needed.

So, God told them exactly what to do when offering sacrifices. Since the Levites were in charge of everything about the tabernacle, they would be in charge of offering these sacrifices. God wanted sacrifices made to Him every day – as well as at special times.

He gave the Israelites instructions about different kinds of sacrifices. For example, they were to offer burnt offerings, grain offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, and trespass offerings. And, for every sacrifice that was to be offered, God told them everything they needed to know so that they could please Him. The Israelites could know what they needed to offer, and the Levites could know how to offer the sacrifices. Then, if God's rules for the sacrifices were not obeyed, the sacrifices would not please Him (remember Nadab and Abihu).

One of the things God wanted from the sacrifices was that only the best things could be used. They were not allowed to use sick, hurt, or blind animals for the sacrifices. Instead, God deserved the very best of what they had since He had done so much for them!

Then, God also told the Israelites to keep some special (holy) days and festivals. These were special times when God wanted the Israelites to offer sacrifices, assemble, or some other thing. Again, He told them exactly what they needed to do at these times.

God told the Israelites to remember the Sabbath day and to keep it holy, as part of the Ten Commandments. The Sabbath day was the seventh day of the week and was to be kept every week. They were to do no work on this day because the seventh day is the day God rested after creation. If someone did not listen to God and worked, that person would be killed (see Numbers 15:32-36). They were also to assemble and the priests had to offer two extra lambs on this day.

Then, God told Israel to observe the new moon. This was the first day of each month. At this time, the priests were to offer an additional two young bulls, one ram, seven male lambs a year old, one male goat as a sin offering, and grain and drink offerings. The silver trumpets Moses made were also to be blown over the sacrifices (Numbers 10:10).

Every year, God told the Israelites to keep some festivals in God's honor (see Exodus 23:10-19). The Festival of Unleavened Bread (Passover) was to be observed for seven days in their month of Abib to remember when God passed over the Israelites and killed all the firstborn of the Egyptians. The Festival of Weeks (Festival of Harvest) lasted one day and required the Israelites to bring their first crops to the Lord.

Then, there were three special times the Israelites had to keep in the seventh month of the year. The Festival of Trumpets was on the first day of the seventh month. It was more special than all the other new moons and was a day for blowing trumpets and making other sacrifices. Next, the Day of Atonement was one of the most important days of the whole year. Special sacrifices were made on this day for the sins of the high priest and all the Israelites. This was the only time when the high priest would enter the most holy place and he would sprinkle blood on the mercy seat. Finally, the Festival of Ingathering (Festival of Shelters) lasted eight days. The Israelites were to assemble, make sacrifices, and live in shelters during this festival to remember their time in the wilderness.

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Study Questions:

- 1) Why was it important for the Israelites to listen to God about the sacrifices and holy days?

- 2) Why did the Israelites need to make sacrifices?

- 3) Who was in charge of making the sacrifices?

- 4) Why did the Israelites need to sacrifice their best animals to God?

- 5) What was special about the Sabbath day?

- 6) What were the Israelites supposed to do on the first day of every month?

- 7) What festivals were the Israelites to keep every year?

- 8) What three special times were to be observed in the seventh month?

Memory Verse:

“Command the Israelites and say to them: Be sure to present to me at its appointed time my offering and my food as my fire offering, a pleasing aroma to me” (Numbers 28:2).

Draw a picture of the lesson you learned about: