

**THE OFFERINGS (9)**

— H. L. Heijkoop

*Leviticus 1 verses 5-17*

In the previous study we dealt with verses 1-4 of Leviticus one. We saw that they concerned the offerings brought by an Israelite to the Lord Who dwelt in the midst of the people. We also observed that this in itself is a type of the meeting we may have on Sunday morning. Besides this we noticed what the first offering, the burnt-offering, represents. It portrays that side of the work of the Lord Jesus that is particularly for God, that is to say it portrays how God has been glorified thereby. We also saw that the person who brought the burnt-offering had to lay his hands on its head. He was well aware, and gave expression to it, that he had been made one with the sacrifice and was made acceptable thereby. The Christian today may come to God in the consciousness that he has been made *one* with the Lord Jesus. God sees him as having been made acceptable in the Beloved. When we are gathered in this way on Sunday morning, we do not come as sinners in need of salvation but as children of God who know that they have been made acceptable and have obtained access to God.

The following verses tell us how this service had to be performed. First the young bullock had to be slain before the face of the Lord. That event is full of significance. It is as if we are brought back to Golgotha to see how the Lord Jesus died. The offerer had to be occupied with the *manner* in which the sacrifice died. What a deep significance this subject has for our hearts, not only *to know* that the Lord Jesus died upon the cross, but *to be intensely occupied with this fact*. When we meet for this purpose, the meeting should not take place in a manner conceived by us; it is never good to give free rein to our imagination in the things of God.

Repeatedly the Word of God speaks about the dying of the Lord Jesus, and it shows the various sides of His death. It paints its outward circumstances; it shows what took place in the heart of the Lord while He hung upon the cross and also *how* He went into death. Now God expects us to enter into these revealed things. Never in the entire history of the world has an event of such deep significance taken place. The Creator of heaven and earth has become Man and has come down into His own creation, only to be rejected by His creatures, but at the same time to die for His creatures. He took their sins upon Himself as well as their sinful nature, as if He were a sinner. And then God judged Him in the place of these people, during the terrible hours upon the cross. The entire creation was united in an alliance against Him and the judgment of God was executed upon Him. Then He glorified God to the utmost.

God expects us to be occupied with this. God hid His face when the Lord Jesus died upon the cross, but at the same time it is true that God the Father never looked with more satisfaction upon Him than during those moments upon the cross. Why did He hang there? Because He loved us! Yes certainly, He loved us, but this was not His first thought as seen in the burnt-offering. It was because He loved *His Father* and wanted to be obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross. Never did God see such obedience, never will there be found obedience like that, nor will anything ever take place that resembles that which happened upon the cross. And on the basis of Christ's death God is now able to execute His counsels. So we can very well understand that God looked down with delight upon the Lord Jesus when He bore our sins upon the cross, and that God expects us to also consider Him. We come together on Lord's Day to announce the death of the Lord Jesus, not to announce that our sins have been forgiven, but to think of the death of Him Who is Lord, the Prince of Life, the Source of all life, Who died upon the cross. What a wonderful fact!

In Leviticus 1 we see that the offerer had to slay the sacrifice, he had to enter deeply into the act he performed. After this we see that other persons played a roll as well. The sons of Aaron had to offer the blood and to sprinkle it around the altar. Why couldn't the offerer do this? This presents a new thought: every believer can bring an offering; all who have peace with God have something to bring, because they have seen something of the glory of the Lord Jesus. When a believer sees something of His perfection and beauty, he is able to bring a burnt-offering. It may be weak, as we will see later on in the turtle doves or the young doves, but as soon as his thoughts go above what he has received, he can offer a burnt-offering.

However, such an offering does not mean that the offerer has insight into the value of the work of the Lord Jesus. Of course, he knows that his sins have been forgiven on the basis of the blood of the Lord Jesus, but there is more. The Word of God speaks of the *power* of the blood: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Colossians 1:20 says that on the basis of the blood of the cross all things will be reconciled to God, and in Revelation 7:14 we find men who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. These are a few examples of the efficacy of the blood of the Lord Jesus. And who know the power of the blood? Only those who habitually are in the presence of God to serve Him: the sons of Aaron.

All believers belong to the house of Aaron as we saw in Leviticus 16. Aaron brought an offering for himself and his house. But not all of the house of Aaron were sons of Aaron. There were young children who could not serve: there were daughters who were allowed to eat of the sacrifices but not allowed to serve. And Leviticus 21 and 22 speaks of sons of Aaron who were not allowed to serve: those who were crippled or deformed were not allowed to serve the Lord. Practically speaking, a priest is a spiritually mature believer, who is accustomed to serve in God's presence, and because he is accustomed to do so and always dwells in God's presence, he knows the thoughts of God, for God leads him. He sees all things with the eyes of God; his feelings, his evaluation are formed by God's presence. Such a person knows the value of the blood of the Lord Jesus.

All who bring a burnt offering could be sons of Aaron, but that is not always the case, therefore the sons of Aaron are mentioned here. They sacrificed the blood and sprinkled it around the altar at the entrance of the tent of meeting. At the place where God and the people met, the blood was sprinkled, so that God saw the blood and all who came saw the blood, when they were gathered around the altar. They all saw it in its distinct efficacies. That must have been a wonderful thing for God to see!

Certainly, God knew the value of the blood infinitely better than the "sons of Aaron." We are not able to tell Him anything new about this subject, but He likes to hear from us about some of the things that we have understood of it; then He has fellowship with us. God admires the blood of the Lord Jesus: in Him God found His delight and He considers Christ's work with satisfaction. God longs to speak with us about these things and He is glad to hear us speak about them when we approach with a burnt-offering.

This sacrifice was brought at the tent of meeting. But beforehand something else had taken place. The one who brought the burnt-offering had to pay attention to it at home. He had to keep the young animal at home and make sure that it was a male, that is to say that it goes its way with practical energy. He had to assure himself that it was without defect; to do so he had to carefully observe it, and only then could he go with it to the tent of meeting. If we are not occupied with the Lord Jesus at home, we cannot bring a burnt-offering. We have to take the sacrifice to the place of meeting and we can only do so if we have been occupied with the Lord at home.

At the tent of meeting the investigation was continued. At home the offerer had seen that his sacrifice was without defect. Yet in verse 6 we read, "and he shall flay the burnt-offering, and cut it up into its pieces." An animal may be perfect outwardly, and yet not be so inwardly. I know a brother who is pretty well always able to control himself: it amazed me that he never got angry. But he said to me, "I do get angry, but I can hide it." None of us is exactly what he outwardly appears to be; we all have something that others do not know about. So God says to us, "Investigate the Lord Jesus, read the Gospels, and you will see how perfect He was, how all His deeds, His words, His entire conduct were perfect; no one could convince Him of sin." But how was His *inward* condition? Of the animal for sacrifice God says, "Take its skin off and look at the inward parts, look at that which is hidden to the eyes of men." We may see this with the Lord Jesus.

The Psalms reveal to us what took place in the heart of the Lord upon the cross. Take Psalm 40, in which He speaks of the pit of destruction and the miry clay, saying, "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me" (vv. 2, 12). That was when He bore our sins. Read that Psalm and see if there was one unrighteousness in Him: there wasn't! In Psalm 22 He said, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and afterwards, "Our fathers confided in Thee: they confided and Thou didst deliver them." Then he added to it, "And Thou art holy, Thou that dwellest amid the praises of Israel" (vv. 1, 4 and 3). He was perfect in all His feelings: there was nothing in Him that was not completely holy before God. God, Who saw all this, desires that we too may see more and more of the Lord's perfection, especially in His finishing the work upon the cross.

We should not limit ourselves to general impressions as to the burnt-offering. The one who brought the offering, had to cut it in *its* pieces, not just *in pieces*. The Word of God portrays everything very accurately and we must consider it in the same way. During the life of the Lord there were moments that He openly manifested love; then we see how perfect His love was. There were also moments that He openly showed His righteousness; then we can observe how perfect His righteousness was. *We* tend to seek love when according to God's thoughts, righteousness should be manifested, and perhaps we seek righteousness where God desires love. The sacrifice had therefore to be cut in *its* pieces. That is to say, we must make an effort to observe when and how the Lord Jesus manifested either *love* in agreement with God's will, or *righteousness* in agreement with God's will. So we ought to consider everything about the Person of the Lord. When we are occupied with this, we see how perfect the Lord was. When love had to be shown, He revealed perfect love, when

grace, a perfect grace; when righteousness, perfect righteousness. Just take a moment to read the words directed to the Pharisees: they are perfectly righteous. When we listen to what He says to the Samaritan woman: it is pure grace. And His words to Mary: perfect love! (Matthew 23; John 4; 20).

God loves to have us think about these things and especially about those moments during which the Lord wrought our salvation. However the examples I referred to a moment ago concern the *life* of the Lord and thus relate more to what is described in chapter 2, the meal-offering. The burnt-offering refers to the *death* of the Lord Jesus. We have the privilege to search God's Word for these things. We may consider how He spoke to the criminal on the cross, what care He had for His mother when He entrusted her to His disciple John, and His reverence for God as seen in Psalms 22 and 40. And when we read Psalms 102 and 109, we see how perfect His feelings were in every circumstance. When it was a question of showing grace, He did it in a perfect way, and He revealed perfect righteousness when that was called for. Just think of the manner in which He spoke to Judas: up to the very end the Lord showed perfect grace, seeking to reach Judas' heart. However, when there was no place for grace, He revealed perfect justice and judgment (Psalm 109:1-20).

All this is a subject to be deeply contemplated. If we have been occupied with these things during the week and then meet on Sunday morning, the Holy Spirit will lead us and show us even more of the glory of the Lord Jesus, and we may bring this glory to God as sacrifice.

In Leviticus 1 we noticed activity of the sons of Aaron, which signifies that the worshipper must have the character of a priest. Verse 7 says that they had to put fire upon the altar and lay wood in order on the fire. Fire typifies God's holiness which searches and tests. Who knows the true character of holiness, and who understands how it searches and tests all things? Only they who dwell in God's presence and abide in His fellowship! In Isaiah 6, the seraphim cover their face and feet with their wings, calling: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts." Isaiah learned to know the holiness of the Lord in His presence, and there we may also learn it. Therefore the sons of Aaron had to put the fire upon the altar.

They also had to put the wood in order on the fire. I believe that the wood speaks to us of the human nature, of what comes forth out of the earth. Therefore it speaks of what man is and what God searches. We find this same thought in Genesis 22 where Abraham prepared the wood. For 4000 years God has been actively engaged to prepare and test the human nature, and finally it was clear that it was only fitted for judgment. So the sons of Aaron laid the wood in order. There was not a single unrighteousness with the Lord, but He took our place; *for us* He was made sin and He took *our sins* upon Himself. Not that this is the burnt-offering, but rather the sin- and trespass-offerings, but at the moment that the Lord was judged in our stead, He glorified God, and this part is the burnt-offering. Although the Lord was the sin-offering during the three dark hours on the cross, He was nevertheless the burnt-offering during the entire time on the cross. In the first three hours He was perhaps only the burnt-offering, but in the last three both the sin-offering and the burnt-offering, and in these hours of darkness He glorified God to the uttermost.

The sons of Aaron, they who are accustomed to act in God's presence, know the fire and how to arrange the wood upon it. They had to put the pieces of the burnt-offering upon the wood which lay upon the fire: "Aaron's sons, the priests, shall lay the pieces, the head, and the fat, in order on the wood that is on the fire which is on the altar" (v. 8). All was laid upon the fire, all was searched. Upon the cross, God searched all that the Lord Jesus was.

In verse 9 we find a new thought: "But its inwards and its legs shall he wash in water." Here we have once again the person who brought the sacrifice; he himself had to wash the inwards and the legs. The *inwards* speak of the inward feelings, the *legs* of the power in service; and they had to be washed with water. The significance of this imagery is not difficult: the sacrifice had to be *entirely* clean if it was to be a type of the Lord. But the application to the Lord Jesus is slightly different. God says, "Observe the love of the Lord Jesus and the power whereby He has finished the work upon the cross,' search whether there was something in Him that was not righteous." There have been men who offered themselves as martyrs, but was their suffering one hundred percent for God? Men have often suffered much, but was that always by the power that God gave? There have also been unconverted persons who suffered similar things.

God says to us, "Apply the water to the Lord Jesus." Water is a type of the purifying power of the Word of God (Ephesians 5:25-26). Apply the entire two edged sword of the Word as a test of the love and the power of the Lord Jesus, and you will see that everything about Him was perfectly pure. When, out of love, He gave Himself to the Father it was love alone: "On this account the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again" (John 10:17).

What we read in Ephesians 5:25, "The Christ also loved the Assembly, and has delivered Himself up for it," was also out of love. His love was perfect and divine. Nothing impure was mixed in with it. The power with which He finished the work was perfect: there was nothing imperfect in Him. Search through the entire Word of God: all that God desired a man to do or to be, found its fulfillment in the Lord Jesus. Then take all what God had said ought *not* to be in man: nothing of it was found in the Lord Jesus. As Man He was as perfect as we ought to have been. In all of this He was acceptable to God.

Then we read, "And the priest shall burn all on the altar, a burnt-offering, an offering by fire to Jehovah of a sweet odour" (v. 9). The word "to burn," which has always the significance of "to burn as incense," is very important here. Another word is used when it concerns the burning (consuming) of a sin-offering. We notice that the burnt-offering was an offering by fire, a sweet odour unto the Lord. What an odour of sweet savour rose up to God from the cross! For 4000 years God had sought for someone who sought Him, for someone who served Him, but He had found none. But then there was a Man who said, "My food is that I should do the will of Him that has sent Me" (John 4:34). This Man was obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross. He glorified God even under the most terrible circumstances. We are unable to fathom what this must have meant to God, the satisfaction that God has found in the Lord upon the cross is too large for us to be able to comprehend. Therefore *all* was presented upon the altar, it was for God alone! Neither the offerer nor the priest ate of it, it was for God alone. But because the priest performed the sacrifice, he could smell somewhat of the sweet savour.

When we, being occupied with the Lord on Sunday morning, express before God the wonderful things that we have found in our Lord upon the cross, we realize that we are unable to fathom the depths of it. How glorious is the work of the Lord Jesus upon the cross, how great was His obedience, how holy were His feelings and how perfect was His love! God alone has been able to fathom it. But although we are not able to do so, we may present it to God. And although the food (reverently spoken) is for God alone, we enjoy something of it. The priest could smell the sweet savour, and that is our part too when we perform that service.

*To be cont'd.*

## **GOD'S PURPOSE (2)**

— *J. van Dijk*

Before we come to our actual subject, God's purpose, we must add a few lines on the things Scripture reveals to us about the eternal condition. In John 1:1-2 we read, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." No other verse reaches farther back than this. Here we find the beginning, not of earth's history (as in Genesis 1:1), or of the Son of God become flesh (as in 1 John 1:1), but of all. *Then*, the Word *was*: Not became or originated, but *was*. The Word was not alone: He was *with* God. Two divine Persons were present (three to be sure, but the third Person, the Spirit, is not found *here*). Where two persons are present there is relationship and communication; as we will see later, this was also true in the eternal past. Then we read, "And the Word was God." This of course gives us an immediate sense that we have left behind the things that we, humans, can grasp. We are called upon to believe, not in the first place to understand. In the things of God, there are many things we cannot understand, we must believe them in simple faith: God speaks, so it is.

Lest we conclude that we only encounter one Person in what we just read, the Spirit (for He by His inspiration of the writer is the actual Author) now repeats, "*He* was in the beginning with God." Firmly and simply, though profoundly, the nature of God has been touched upon. We have been introduced to two Persons, yet the One *is* the Other, *was* the Other; always and forever. It is a mystery we must believe!

Elsewhere we read of another Person Who is eternal; Hebrews 9:14 introduces us to the eternal Spirit, and there are passages in Scripture which show the Spirit active as one of the divine Persons and being God. Although I did not like to continue without making this observation, we will not now dwell on the Person and work of the Spirit.

We touched upon the relationship between the divine Persons. In John 17:24 Christ, as Son, speaks of it to His Father, "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." A relationship of intimacy, of close, loving affection was present then. It is in this setting that we are introduced to God's purpose. It found its origin, its meaning, its depth and its width in that pre-creation love-relationship between the Father, and the Son. In that setting God purposed in Christ Jesus (Eph. 3:11). The unfolding of God's purpose would be one grand display of the all-various wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:9-11; 1 Corinthians 2:7) and of the Father's love for His Son.

If it were not for revelation from God Himself, we would have no way of knowing what took place, or what God's thoughts and plans were before creation. Let us look at some of the verses in the New Testament which speak of that pre-creation period. There are three among them that show that God had a definite purpose before the world's foundation, although not all mention God's purpose directly. In 2 Timothy 1:9 we read, "His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time." Ephesians 3:11 refers to God's purpose as, "the purpose of the ages, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Both verses show us that God's purpose was in Christ Jesus: it concerned Christ

intimately. Another verse connecting this pre-creation period with God's plans is 1 Cor. 2:7, "That hidden wisdom which God had predetermined before the ages for our glory."

From these verses it is clear to us that *before creation*, God had a purpose which concerned His Son. God, the Father had a plan whereby He would give expression to His love for His Son (John 17:24). But while reading these verses we must have been struck by another party which has been introduced in 2 Timothy 1:9. There it says, "His own purpose and grace which was given to *us*." Here we have the first indication of the fact that man had a place in God's purpose. When God purposes His purpose in Christ, He brings in creation, man. This is a profound thought, God, desirous of giving an expression of love and affection to Christ, to set forth Him Who is Wisdom, God is introducing His creation. This thought (with related subjects brought in) is expressed in Colossians 1:16, "All things have been created... for Him (Christ)." It is also found in Ephesians 3:9,11, "God... has created all things, in order that... might be made known... the all-various wisdom of God, according to the purpose of the ages." Here we find God's purpose of creation. Man is introduced as the means whereby God will give a display of His thoughts about Christ, a display of who God is. It is a thought that causes us to be quiet in the presence of our Creator, for we cannot think of man, without thinking of fallen man, man in sin. But in the verses we have read sin is not mentioned, God's purpose did not have sin in view. But before we look further into this matter, we should look more at God's purpose itself.

*To be cont'd.*

## **HE IS ABLE<sup>1</sup>**

— R. K. Campbell

I would like to meditate with you on a number of verses from the Bible that contain the thought, "He — Jesus Christ — is able." What a wonderful assurance it is to know that He is able, whatever need may arise.

The first verses I would draw your attention to are found in Matthew 9:27-30. "When Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus said unto them, *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened."

The challenging question the Lord put to these needy blind men was, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" The Lord puts the same challenging question to us in our needs. We are not able for them, but do we believe that *He* is able to do it for us? These blind men cried to the Lord to have mercy upon them and they answered His question with an affirmative "Yes Lord." The Lord Jesus lovingly touched their blind eyes and said: "According to your faith be it unto you," and then their eyes were opened.

The Lord delights to see faith in Himself for whatever our needs may be, and according to our faith in Him He meets those needs. We need the touch of His powerful and loving hands upon us to experience the desired change in our persons, our lives and our circumstances.

Of old the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?" This is another searching question the Lord puts to us — "Is there any thing too hard for me?" (Jeremiah 32:27). He also told Jeremiah: "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jeremiah 33:3).

In Hebrews 2:18 we read that the Lord Jesus "Himself hath suffered being tempted, *He is able* to succor (or help) them that are tempted." The blessed Saviour was tempted of Satan and suffered in His soul thereby, so He knows how to help those who are tried and tempted. He is able to help us in the conflict with Satan and in the battles of life. Hebrews 5:7 tells us that "in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."

How assuring is this that Jesus knows what trouble is and that at one time He obtained victory by crying prayers and tears. 1 Corinthians 10:13 assures us: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." We can always count upon the faithfulness of our God and Father who knows what we can bear and makes a way out so that we are able to carry whatever burden or trial He allows to come to us.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless marked otherwise, Scripture quotations are taken from the Authorized Version.

Then in Hebrews 7 we are given the comforting certainty that Jesus Christ has an unchangeable priesthood, "Wherefore *He is able also to save* them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (v. 25). It has been well said in comment upon this verse that Jesus Christ is able to save from the "guttermost" of sin to the uttermost of glory. Yes, He is able to save us all the way home, through all the trials, temptations and dangers of the wilderness journey in an enemy's land. He is able to bring us safely to heaven, not only because He died for our sins, but because He ever lives in heaven to intercede for us as our great High Priest.

In the high-priestly prayer of the Lord in John 17, just before His suffering for sin on the cross, He prayed to the Father for those who believed. He said, " I pray... that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (vv. 15-17).

A hymn writer has wonderfully expressed the force of our great High Priest's intercessions in the following words:

*Our great High Priest is sitting  
At God ' s right hand above,  
For us His hands uplifting,  
In sympathy and love;  
Whilst here below, in weakness,  
We onward speed our way;  
In sorrow oft and sickness,  
We sigh and groan and pray.*

*Through manifold temptations,  
My soul holds on her course,  
Christ's mighty intercession  
Alone is her resource;  
My gracious High Priest's pleadings,  
Who on the cross did bleed,  
Bring down God's grace and blessings,  
Help in each hour of need.*

We are not able to keep ourselves from sin. The warning is "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). But if we depend upon the Lord to keep us, He will hold us up, "for *God is able to make him stand*" as Romans 14:4 promises. Yea, Jude 24 assures us: "Now to *Him who is able to keep you from stumbling*, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy" (NASB). Our confidence must be in the Lord who is able to keep us even from stumbling and present us faultless before the presence of His glory.

We have another beautiful example of faith and trust in God being able to deliver in the account in Daniel 3 of the three Hebrew youths. When they were threatened by king Nebuchadnezzar of being cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace if they did not fall down and worship the image of gold he had made, they replied to the king, "If it be so, *our God* whom we serve *is able to deliver us* from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." They believed that their God was able to deliver them and that He would deliver them out of the king's hand. However, they added, "But if not," if it was not God's will to spare them from death, they declared that they would not serve Nebuchadnezzar's pagan gods or his idolatrous image.

We know the marvelous answer God gave to their faith, of how a miracle was performed in their behalf so that the fire only burned off the cords that bound them and they walked in the midst of the fire with the Son of God without a hair of their head singed, or their coats burned and no smell of fire passed on them. They walked out of the fiery furnace at the king's command and their God was proclaimed as the only God that can deliver in this manner. The king also promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

In the next issue we will take a look at another event recorded in Daniel which shows us that *He is able* even in the most adverse circumstances.

*To be cont'd.*