Refreshed IN THE WORD
For thy word hath quickened me
PSALM 119:50

Torah Studies

Connecting the Torah and Jesus

STUDY 2

God Calls Us Near

Leviticus 1 and the burnt offering

God teaches Israel how to approach Him in covenant worship. We will read the whole first chapter of Leviticus, observe the burnt offering, and consider how the New Testament describes Jesus giving Himself for us. Our obedience grows as a response to His mercy.

For personal reading and study with friends

King James Version · Complete Scripture passages

Read and share online

Read one section at a time. Take turns reading the verses aloud, discuss the questions, and choose one practical response. Every passage referenced in the teaching is included in full.

Remember the foundation

In the first study, Torah introduced us to God's instruction within His covenant story. He rescued Israel and taught them how to live as His people. We continue by observing the original passage, considering its connection to Jesus, and responding as His disciples.

God dwells among His people

Exodus 40:34-38

34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

35 And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

36 And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys:

37 But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up.

38 For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

Exodus closes with the Lord’s glory filling the tabernacle and His presence guiding Israel’s journeys. Leviticus begins with His voice coming from that place. Worship is a response to the holy God who has drawn near and speaks.

Acceptance and atonement

Leviticus 1:1-4

1 And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock.

3 If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD.

4 And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.

Verses 1 and 2 identify the speaker, the messenger, and the people being instructed. The Lord speaks to Moses for Israel. In verse 3, an offering from the herd must be a male without blemish and be brought to the entrance of the tent of meeting.

Verse 4 explicitly connects the burnt offering with acceptance and atonement. The worshiper lays a hand on the animal's head. This associates the person with the offering, although the chapter does not explain every aspect of that gesture.

The Hebrew name olah is associated with going up or ascent and is used for the burnt offering. This was an actual sacrifice in Israel's worship, involving atonement. A personal application about wholehearted devotion should retain that original meaning.

Which verse names atonement? What does the passage say about the condition of the offering?

The worshiper and the priests

Leviticus 1:5-9

5 And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

6 And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces.

7 And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire:

8 And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar:

9 But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

The worshiper slaughters and prepares the animal; the priests handle its blood and arrange the altar offering. The inward parts and legs are washed. The actions are ordered by God’s instruction rather than left to improvisation.

In older English, “flay” means remove the skin and “inwards” means internal organs. The closing description presents the offering as pleasing to the Lord. The text teaches us to take His holiness and His instruction seriously.

Offerings from the flock

Leviticus 1:10-13

10 And if his offering be of the flocks, namely, of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt sacrifice; he shall bring it a male without blemish.

11 And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar.

12 And he shall cut it into his pieces, with his head and his fat: and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar:

13 But he shall wash the inwards and the legs with water: and the priest shall bring it all, and burn it upon the altar: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

This section describes a sheep or goat. Notice the repeated requirements and the particular details, including the north side of the altar. Reading carefully means observing both what repeats and what changes.

An offering of birds

Leviticus 1:14-17

14 And if the burnt sacrifice for his offering to the LORD be of fowls, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves, or of young pigeons.

15 And the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head, and burn it on the altar; and the blood thereof shall be wrung out at the side of the altar:

16 And he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers, and cast it beside the altar on the east part, by the place of the ashes:

17 And he shall cleave it with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder: and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

The chapter also provides for turtledoves or young pigeons. The procedure differs from that for cattle, sheep, or goats, yet the closing description again says the offering is pleasing to the Lord.

Leviticus 1 does not explicitly assign these three categories to income levels. Stay close to what this chapter says. As a devotional application, we can examine whether we judge someone's worship by its outward expense.

Compare the endings of verses 9, 13, and 17. What description do they share?

Jesus obeys the Father

Matthew 26:36-46

36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

In Gethsemane, Jesus' sorrow is real and His obedience is willing. He brings His distress to the Father in prayer and submits to the Father's will. The disciples' weakness also shows their need to watch and pray.

This scene helps us consider the willing obedience of Jesus as He approaches His death. We need not assign each action in Leviticus 1 to a separate moment in the garden. The New Testament itself gives us the central sacrificial connection in the next passage.

Christ loved us and gave Himself

Ephesians 5:1-2

1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Paul explicitly calls Christ's self-giving an offering and sacrifice to God. The language of a pleasing aroma recalls the language of Israel's offerings. Jesus' love is both the gift we receive and the pattern for our walk.

Notice the order: beloved children are called to imitate God and walk in love. Our response grows from the love shown to us in Christ.

His offering is once for all

Hebrews 10:10-14

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Hebrews presents Jesus' offering as decisive and sufficient. His sacrifice is offered once for all, and He sits at God's right hand. Our devotion receives and responds to His work; it does not repeat or complete His sacrifice.

This is why our obedience cannot be a payment for forgiveness. We approach God through what Christ has done and learn to live in the good of His mercy.

Our response to mercy

Romans 12:1-2

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Paul appeals to God’s mercies and calls believers to present their bodies as a living sacrifice. That response reaches our speech, work, relationships, choices, and use of time. The renewing of our minds helps us discern and practice what pleases God.

Discuss with a friend

1 What does Leviticus 1 explicitly say about acceptance and atonement?

2 Which actions belong to the worshiper and which to the priests?

3 How does Ephesians 5:2 connect Jesus’ love with sacrifice?

4 What does Hebrews teach about the completeness of His offering?

5 Where do you need to respond to mercy with willing obedience today?

Practice and remember

Choose a relationship in which obedience will require patience, honesty, forgiveness, or generosity. Pray about it and take one concrete step before your next study. Tell a friend how God’s mercy shapes your response.

Memory verse

Ephesians 5:2

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Read the verse aloud, repeat it from memory, and check every phrase. Explain separately how walking in love could change one responsibility this week.

Pray together

Father, thank You for teaching Your people and for Jesus, who loved us and gave Himself for us. Help us rest in His completed sacrifice and respond to Your mercy with willing hearts. Shape our choices, renew our minds, and teach us to walk in love. In Jesus' name, amen.

Notes for the study leader

Keep atonement central when explaining the burnt offering. Compare the three offering sections without inventing identical procedures. Ephesians uses explicit sacrificial language for Christ; Hebrews teaches the finality of His offering; Romans calls for a response to mercy. Ask the group to show where each answer appears in the text.

Scripture and sources

Scripture text was checked against the King James Version published by eBible.org. The complete verses are reproduced with their historical wording. Verse numbers and layout are adapted for reading; editorial footnotes are omitted. Tap any Scripture reference to view its source.

Bible edition and text

Hebrew word reference for olah