

## Lesson #6 - Leviticus 2018

Before starting this lesson, read at least **Exodus chapters 31:18 - 32:25; Leviticus 6, 7, 16:1-28; 16:1-16; 19; 25, 26**  
If possible read the whole book. You may find it helpful to read just the minimum chapters, go thru the lesson and then read the whole book. You will discover what works best for you.

The books of Exodus and Leviticus are full of pictures and picture language. This lesson is an explanation of these pictures.

Exodus began with the Jews living in slavery in Egypt. God works thru Pharaoh and Moses to get them out. Two months after leaving Egypt, they arrive near Mt. Sinai. This is where they will stay for the next year.

The Bible says no one has seen God the Father. He is Spirit. Because He does not have a body, we cannot see Him with our physical eyes. Yet, as we go thru these chapters, we read about people who see God.

This does not mean they see God Himself. It means they see things that **represent** His presence and power.

For example, after Moses gets instruction from God, he prepares the people to receive instruction. As the Jews gather at the foot of Mt. Sinai, they hear thunder and the sound of a trumpet; they feel an earthquake; they see lighting, fire and smoke coming from the mountain as tho it is going to erupt. Suddenly a thick cloud covers the top part of the mountain. Altho the people do not *see* God, they know they are in His presence. Then they hear God's voice. He gives them His 10 basic laws - what we call the 10 Commandments.

The power, holiness and greatness of God's presence is so overwhelming, the people do not want God to continue. They have experienced the true fear of God. They want God to give the rest of the laws to Moses and then **he** can tell them. Moses receives 603 additional commands. These combined 613 laws explain what God expects in their morals, their faith and their relationships.

I want to mention 2 of these laws because they have been misunderstood and taken out of context.

First of all, the command, *do not kill*. This does **not** mean people cannot be killed. The Hebrew literally says, *do not commit murder*. This means an individual is not to intentionally kill someone else unless there is a just cause such as self-protection, the protection of family and friends or the defense of a nation in time of war. But God has given authority to governments and by extension, courts and juries. They have a right to decide whether people should live or die, based on guidelines that are fair and just. So *do not kill* means "do not commit murder without just cause".

The second misunderstood law talks about *an eye for an eye*. Everyone thinks it means retaliation. Whatever a person does to you, you demand the same or more from him. That is not the meaning. Once again, interpretation must come from the context as well as the culture of that time.

In the Middle East, nations and peoples had laws that said if someone harms you, whether it is a serious or minor injury, you can demand his death.

God's law said, "if a person knocks out your tooth, you do not have to seek punishment. But if you insist on absolute justice, the maximum you can demand is the loss of his tooth. If he damages your eye, if you insist on absolute justice, the maximum you can demand is his eye. You cannot demand his death for minor injuries". God gave this law for **protection** because some people demanded punishment that did not fit the crime. The *eye for an eye* law was a reflection of God's justice and mercy. His people were also to reflect this justice and mercy.

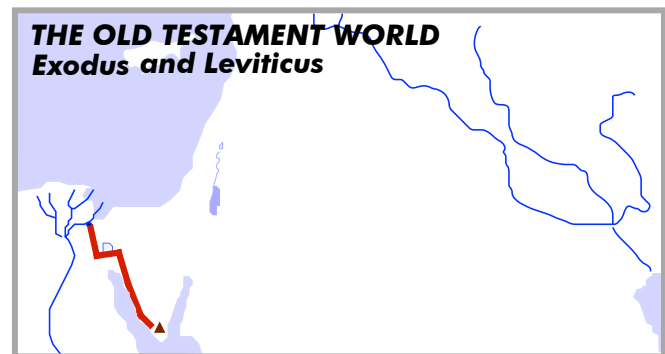
These 613 laws are a contract between God and His people.

If they **obey**, there will be blessings.

The most important blessing is their relationship and companionship with God.

They will enjoy God and He will enjoy them.

He will use them to communicate His salvation message.



If they **disobey**, there will be consequences.

God will **separate** Himself from them and their enjoyment will be broken.

There will also be loss of physical blessings.

If their disobedience is in defiance and rebellion against God's laws; if it is willful and pre-meditated, they will be killed under God's laws of capital punishment.

After hearing the rules, the people as a group, respond, *We will do everything Yahweh has said.* Ex. 19:8. They accept and agree to the contract. A few days later Moses repeats the laws and again they say they want these laws and they will do everything God has said. A 3<sup>rd</sup> time they are told the laws and God asks if they understand the terms and conditions of this contract. Do they understand the fine print? Do they understand that if they break certain laws, there is the penalty of death. And for a 3<sup>rd</sup> time they say *yes, we understand and agree to the conditions. We will obey all of these laws.* With this, the contract is signed, not with the signature of a pen, but with an animal sacrifice and a meal. The Jewish elders, priests and Moses go part way up the mountain and eat a meal in the presence of God. They did not see Him, but there was either some form of light or a cloud and they knew God was with them. After the meal, the leaders returned to the people.

A short time later God tells Moses to return to the mountain for more instruction. Moses is gone for a period of 40 days. Once again we have the Jewish style of writing involving numbers. Certain numbers have a spiritual as well as a literal meaning. The number 40 thruout the Bible, is always connected with *judgment* or *testing*. In the days of Noah, there was forty days of rain. This was pointing to judgment because the people had refused to repent. In this case, there are forty days that Moses is gone. God is *testing* the people to see if they will keep the contract they have just made with Him.

Five weeks later, the people tell Aaron, *We need a visible God, one that we can see and touch.*

They give him their gold and he melts it down to a flat sheet. He then beats it into a very thin sheet that we call gold leaf. Evidently some of the people had brought a wooden calf with them when they left Egypt. Aaron overlays it with gold. The Bible refers to it as a cast idol. To us this means liquid gold poured into a mold. But the Hebrew words mean gold leaf or overlay. The fact that later on, Moses burned the idol, ground it into powder and threw it into a stream shows the calf was made of wood.

Aaron and the people say the calf represents Yahweh God who brought them out of Egypt and saved them from the Egyptian army. They celebrate with animal sacrifices, food, music, dancing and immorality. This immorality is so bad, the Bible says they are *corrupt*. This is the same word connected with the people in the days of Noah. It means sexual perversion and twisting of morals. People begin to say that wrong is right and right is wrong. They engage in every kind of sexual immorality.

Up on the mountain God knows what is happening. Suddenly He tells Moses, *go down and deal with **your** people.* This shows that God has separated Himself from the people. His relationship with them is broken because the people have broken the contract. As Moses comes down the mountain he is carrying 2 tablets of stone on which God recorded the 10 commandments. When Moses sees the immorality, he breaks the 2 tablets where everyone can see him do it. This is not a temper tantrum. The 2 tablets are 2 copies of the contract. Using picture language, Moses breaks the stone tablets to show the people **they** have broken the contract.

Just 40 days earlier, the people had accepted God's laws with their conditions. They had signed the contract. If God ignores their disobedience, the people will think the laws do not matter. They can break them anytime they want. God has to respond - both for their sake and His.

In the Bible, this **response** is called God's *anger* or *wrath*. Most people are uncomfortable with the phrase, *God's anger*. In our culture, we connect anger with cruelty and people out of control. In addition, we have been taught that anger is a sin; anger is wrong.

This phrase is another example of extreme words to express non-extreme meanings. God is never cruel and He is never out of control. That is impossible.

When there is evil, flagrant disobedience, terrible injustice or wrong, we expect and want God to respond. The Bible calls that response,

**GOD'S ANGER**      His holiness responds to unholiness.  
                                 His justice responds to injustice.

His response involves 2 actions.

1. God **separates** Himself **from** the wrong and then
2. He sends **consequences** for the wrong.

**God's wrath or anger** is God's response to wrong; His response to injustice and disobedience.

In the Bible, whenever you see the phrase *God's anger*, change it to *God's response to disobedience/evil*.

You will find it completely changes how you think about God and what He does.

God's people at Mt. Sinai break the contract, so God has to respond.

He **separates** Himself from them and sends the **consequences** - 3000 people die.

To us, this seems much too severe. But remember the contract the people agreed to? It said that *anyone* guilty of immorality or idolatry was to be killed. Based on the contract, everyone, but Moses, should have died. But God showed mercy and gave His people an opportunity to repent. Aaron and the Levites were the first to respond and they led the others to repent. Their lives were spared. But some continued to be defiant and in rebellion against God. These were the 3000 who died. *Edersheim OT History*, p. 129.

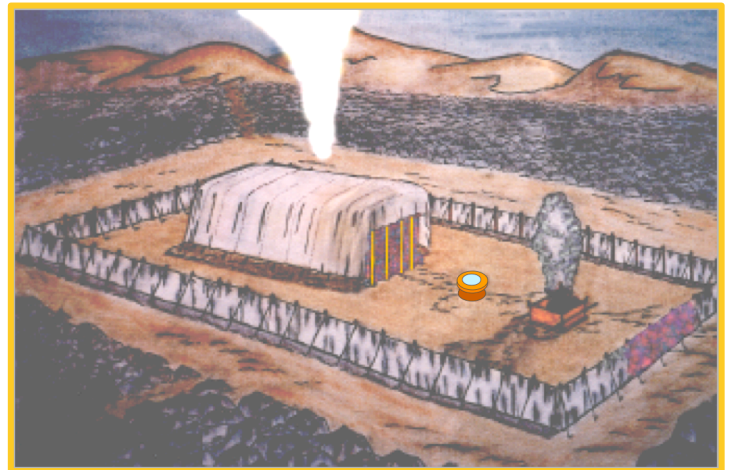
The Jews had wanted a list of God's laws. They thought it would be easy to keep them and they could be right with God all on their own. Now, 40 days later, with this testing, they realize they cannot keep God's laws. They need His forgiveness; they also need His mercy. God knew this, but only now do the people understand it. On the mountain, God had been telling Moses how He, God, would forgive and show mercy to the people. He will use a portable structure called the tabernacle.

The tabernacle represents the presence of God. It is set up in the center of the camp. In picture language God is saying He wants to be central in their life.

The area for the tabernacle is a rectangle 150 feet long by 75 feet wide. It is enclosed with a fence made of white linen cloth. There is just one gate on the eastern side, made of beautifully woven cloth. Inside the rectangle, just in front of the gate, is an altar for animal offerings. It is 7½ feet square and 4½ high. Directly west of it is a basin for washing hands and feet.

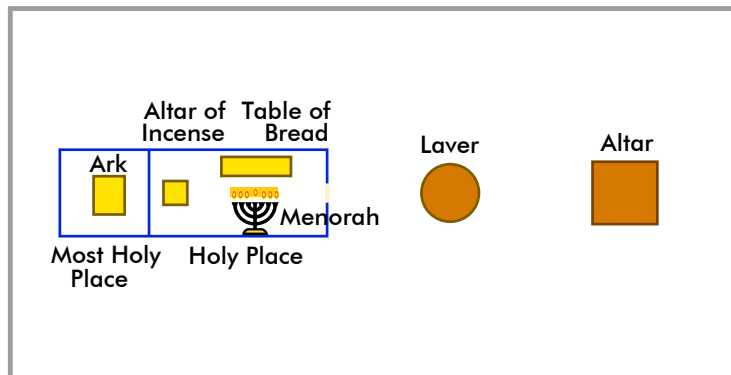
Just west of the altar and basin is the tabernacle or building itself.

This is a structure 45 x 15 feet. It is made with wooden boards standing on end and overlaid with gold on the inside. It is divided into 2 rooms. The roof includes 4 different coverings. A cover of cloth woven with beautiful colors is seen from the inside. Over it is 3 coverings of animal skins to protect everything from the sun, moisture or wind.

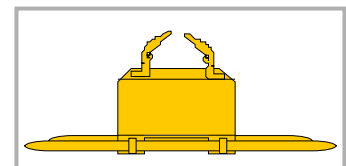


The first room is called the Holy Place.

The door is a heavy cloth, woven with beautiful colors. Inside and to the right - the north - is a table with 2 stacks of flat round bread on it, 6 on each stack. It is literally called *the bread of faces*, a Hebrew phrase meaning *face to face*. As the priests eat the bread in the Holy Place, it represents eating in God's presence. In picture language, it represents being face to face with God, so it is called *the bread of faces*. The table for the bread is 3 feet long x 1½ feet wide.



On the opposite side of the room, a menorah, sometimes



called a candlestick or lamp stand, provides the light. At the far end, there is an altar of incense 1½ feet square with a veil or curtain in back of it.

On the other side of the curtain is a smaller room called the Most Holy Place. It used to be called the Holy of Holies. In this room, there is just one piece of furniture - an open wooden box overlaid with gold. The lid is pure gold with 2 sculptured angels on top. The angels are facing each other, looking down at the lid. Their wings are outstretched. This golden box with the gold lid is called the *Ark of the Covenant* or *ark of testimony*. A flame of fire hovers just above the angels.

Thruout the Bible, God's invisible presence is made visible in some form, such as fire or bright light. It was thought of as God's glory. People could not see God, but they could see evidence of His glory. In English, it is called the *Shechinah Glory*. The Hebrew word is *Shekh-chi-náh*. It means *to live in one place, to tabernacle*. So the flame of fire above the angels in the Most Holy Place is the *Shechinah Glory* - evidence of God living in their midst. But the only person allowed to see this flame is the head priest when he enters the room one time a year.

Because of this, there is also a cloud outside, hovering over the tabernacle. At night it is luminescent as tho there were a fire in the cloud. It also is the *Shechinah glory* - the visible evidence of God's presence that everyone can see. People living on the furthest edge of camp might not be able to see the tabernacle, but day or night they could always see the cloud. They could be assured God is living with them.

According to the contract between God and the Jewish people, if they disobeyed God's laws, they would be separated from God. But now with the tabernacle, they can bring a perfect animal and the animal can make payment for their disobedience. The animal can die in their place; they can be forgiven and their relationship with God can be restored. However animal sacrifices only covered *unintentional* sins, meaning sins that were done in carelessness, forgetfulness or unawareness. In addition, if people violated the rights of their neighbor by any kind of fraud, they also could be forgiven with an animal sacrifice and paying their neighbor 120% restitution. But if their sin was willful and pre-meditated, in defiance or in rebellion against God's laws, an animal could not die in their place. They would have to pay with their own life.

The people offered animal sacrifices for **their** disobedience.

Then once a year the head priest offered an animal sacrifice for sins of the **nation**.

He took some of the animal's blood all the way into the Most Holy Place. He put the blood on the gold lid that covered the ark. In picture language it was saying the Jews as a nation have not kept all of God's laws, but an animal died for their disobedience. The blood was proof of the animal's death.

With the payment for their disobedience, God's requirement was met and He could show them **mercy**. So the lid of the ark where the blood was put, was called the *mercy seat*. Another name was the *place of propitiation*. That means God can turn towards His people instead of turning away from them. 1 John 2:2

That day, 1 time a year, when the high priest put blood on the mercy seat was called Yom Kippur; *Yom* means *day*; *Kippur* means *covering*. Day of Coverings. Our Bible calls it Day of Atonement. But the correct name is Day of Coverings. Because of the animal sacrifice, the sin of the nation is covered. God can stay and live with His people for another year.

When describing the tabernacle in Exodus, there is lots of repetition. Seven chapters tell God's people how to build it. Because God gave it to be a picture, it is important to know if they built it correctly. This is why there are 6 more chapters telling what the people actually built. When we compare the details we find they built it exactly as they were told. We can have confidence the picture is accurate.

For the Jews in the Old Testament,

The **COLORS** were visual reminders:

The **red** reminded them that disobedience is costly - an animal had to die so they could be forgiven.

The **blue** reminded them of God in His heavenly character.

The **white** made them think of God's purity.

The **purple** reminded them that God was their King.

All the **FURNITURE** was a reminder and picture

The **altar** for animal sacrifice reminded them of the cost of disobedience

The **basin** reminded them they needed cleansing and forgiveness

The **bread** reminded them of their dependence on God and that He would provide for them

In the Middle East bread is considered essential to life. People believed they could live without other food, but they could not live without bread. As God's people, the Jews would live without a lot of other things but they could not live without God.

The **menorah** told them they were to represent God and give His light to those around them

The altar of **incense** reminded them that God listened to and heard their prayers

The **ark** pictured God's presence. He was living with them so He could enjoy them and they could enjoy Him

The **METALS** had significance. In fact thruout the Bible,

**Silver** is a picture of redemption or salvation

**Bronze** pictures judgment of sin;

**Gold** is a picture of His deity and glory.

This was the meaning for the Jews in the Old Testament. It was one big picture about God and them - their relationship with God.

Some 1400 years later in the days of the New Testament - after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus; after the Church was formed and developed, as Jewish believers read and thought about the tabernacle in Jewish history, they had one of those moments of *ah-ha*. We see it! God designed the tabernacle to be a picture of Jesus.

The **colors** in the tabernacle were a picture of Jesus' ministry.

**Red** pointed to His blood, showing He came as God's Lamb. **Blue** pictured His deity and heavenly character.

**Purple** was a picture of His royalty; He is King. **White** reminded them of His purity and ministry as priest.

The **furniture** gave them even more pictures and details of Jesus

Much of the furniture was made of wood and overlaid with gold. The **wood** pictures Jesus' humanity; the **gold**, His deity. When Jesus came to this world, He came as humanity and deity, wood overlaid with gold.

The **altar** for the animal offerings illustrates Jesus dying for us

The **basin** pictures Jesus cleansing us - forgiving our disobedience

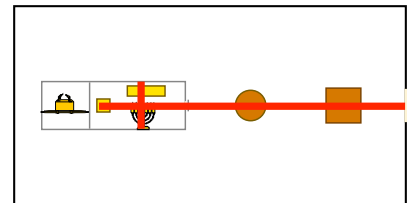
The **bread** on the table points to Jesus as the bread of life.

He is essential to our life. He is the One who sustains us and gives us life

The **menorah** pictures Jesus, the light of the world; the One who gives direction and guidance to our life.

The altar of **incense** pictures Jesus as priest, who is praying and interceding for us.

The **ark** is a picture of Jesus Himself.



In the Old Testament, the tabernacle was a picture of God living with His people. John in the New Testament says, *Jesus became flesh and tabernacled among us*. John 1:14 *As Deity and Humanity, Jesus came into our world to live - to tabernacle with us.* **He was the visual evidence of the invisible God.**

In the **OLD TESTAMENT**, animal offerings **covered** the sin of God's people.

But there was always the danger. If sin is only covered, it could be uncovered.

John in the **NEW TESTAMENT** says Jesus came as the Lamb of God to **take away** the sin of the world.

Because of Jesus' payment, when we ask God to forgive us, our sin is not covered. It is totally removed as far as the east is from the west. It is never remembered again.

In the **OLD TESTAMENT**, animals could only forgive certain kinds of sin.

In the **NEW TESTAMENT** Jesus' payment forgives **every** kind of sin. Even if we have disobeyed God deliberately and willfully, in rebellion or in defiance against Him, when we admit our sin and ask His forgiveness, He is faithful to forgive our sin and to cleanse us from **every kind** of wrong.

In the **OLD TESTAMENT**, every day the priest would offer a sacrifice on the altar, wash in the basin, fix the wicks on the menorah, eat bread from the table and burn incense on the altar of incense.

This daily ministry of the priest was the way Jews could have God's presence and His forgiveness.

If you trace the footsteps of the priest, you see God arranged it to form a picture of the cross. It is the sacrifice of Jesus that is **OUR** way to enjoy God's presence, His forgiveness and His mercy.

In the **OLD TESTAMENT**, the head priest could enter God's presence only one time a year. A heavy curtain or veil kept everyone from God's presence.



When Jesus died, God the Father tore that curtain in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem.

He was saying that Jesus' payment **NOW** gives anyone at anytime, the right to come directly into His presence. It is why, to this day, we end our prayers, *in Jesus' name, thru the name of our Lord Jesus Christ* or *because of Jesus*. God hears and answer our prayers because of who Jesus is and what He has done.

Almost 40 years after Jesus went back to heaven, Jewish believers received a book that put these things together. They were told that all the Old Testament worship system was a picture or shadow. In every way, Jesus was better because He was the reality and fulfillment. We have this book in our New Testament – the book of *Hebrews*.

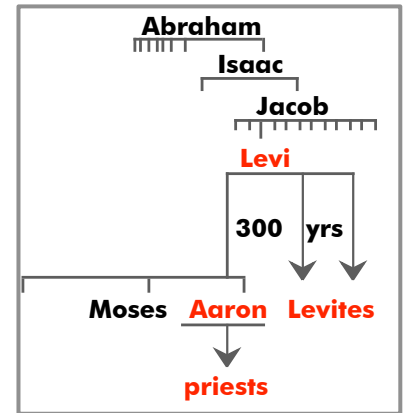
The tabernacle was the place of worship for God's people. God chooses the tribe of Levi to take care of it. They become known as the **Levites**.

To understand who they are, let's review Jewish history. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob formed the Jewish race. Jacob had 12 sons and one daughter. His 3<sup>rd</sup> son was named Levi. Levi had 3 sons. Over the next 300 plus years, those 3 sons had a lot of descendants. They became the Levites.

Moses, Aaron and Miriam descended from one of the sons. Moses and Miriam were prophets. Because Aaron made the golden calf, he should have died. His life was spared because he truly repented. He was one of the first to lead the people in repentance. His disobedience had not been a deliberate, willful rebellion against God. Aaron was a man who was weak in character and allowed the people to push him into it.

According to Deuteronomy 9:20, Aaron's life was also spared because Moses begged God not to kill him.

God's grace and mercy are seen in the life of Aaron in an unbelievable way. God not only forgave Aaron but also made him the head priest, referred to as high priest. From then on, only his sons and direct descendants would have the right to be Jewish priests. God gives them special garments. God said He wanted His spiritual leaders to dress so they had dignity and honor. Ex. 28:39-40



The priests are to represent the people before God.

When Aaron dies, his first-born son will become head priest. This position will be carried on by the first-born son of each successive generation.

All the rest of the Levites are responsible for the Tabernacle. During the time the Jews are traveling in the wilderness, the Levites will take it down and set it up. They will maintain it when the people stay in one place.

They will also do the work connected with the sacrifices. The Levites take care of the Tabernacle, but only Aaron's descendants can be priests in the Tabernacle.

The last half of Exodus is instruction for God's **people**. He gives them His laws and tells them how to **build** the Tabernacle.

God's next instruction is to the **Levites**. He tells them how to **use** the Tabernacle thru sacrifices, ceremonies and holy days. There is so much information that God puts it in a manual.

## LEVITICUS

### OUTLINE

Holiness thru sacrifices 1-10 It deals with...  
the sacrifices and  
the priesthood.

Holiness thru separation 11-27

The Jews are to be separate or different from all other nations.  
This difference is seen in...  
their laws  
their holy days  
their promises and  
their warnings

All of this is for the Jews  
in **their** form of worship.

## PURPOSE

It tells the Levites what to do and how to do it.

## DATE OF WRITING

The instruction is given over a period of a month and Moses writes it down around 1400 or 1300 BC.

## THEME

The theme is *holiness*. This word is found some 87 times thruout the book.

Because this is a survey, we are not going to look at any of these details.

But we do need to look at the sacrifices. They are not just ritual for ritual sake. Once again, they are pictures of Jesus. It will take 5 animal offerings to picture the one sacrifice of Jesus.

### 5 ANIMAL OFFERINGS

#### JESUS' SACRIFICE



**Burnt** - total obedience in death

**Grain** - total obedience in life

**Peace** - making peace

**Sin** - paying penalty for sin

**Trespass** - providing forgiveness

#### Burnt / Holocaust Offering

1:3.

It is the only offering that does not set aside some of the meat to be eaten with others. It is completely given to God. It pictures Jesus, in His humanity, with total obedience to the Father, in His **death**.

#### Grain Offering

2:1 Some Bibles call it the oblation, the meal or cereal offering.

Notice, it is an offering that does not involve blood.

Grain in the Bible is always a picture of life. Here it pictures Jesus, in His humanity, with total obedience to the Father, in His **life**. It is because of Jesus' life, that His death has value.

Someone has said, *He had to be who He was, in order to do what He did*. He had to be who He was, perfect deity and perfect humanity, *in order to do what He did* - make payment for our disobedience. Remember, two other men were on crosses alongside of Jesus, but they did nothing for us. It was only because of who Jesus **was**, that He could do what He **did**.

#### Peace Offering

3:1. Your Bible may say communion sacrifice, fellowship or thank offering.

It is a picture of Jesus making peace between God the Father and us. Instead of alienation, there can be reconciliation. Because of Jesus' payment, the Father does not have to separate Himself from us. We can have peace with God as well as the peace of God in our lives.

#### Sin Offering

4:3 The **sin** offering, is a picture of Jesus paying the penalty for sin.

#### Trespass / Guilt Offering

5:18 The **trespass** or **guilt** offering pictures Jesus forgiving our sin.

God the Father saw all of these things in the sacrifice of Jesus.

There is one more picture about two of these five offerings - the **sin offering** and the **burnt offering**.

In the days of the Old Testament, when a person disobeyed and wanted God's forgiveness, he or she had to first of all bring a perfect lamb to the gate of the tabernacle. The person laid his hand on the head of the animal. In picture form, he was transferring all his sin to the animal, and the animal died for his sin, in his place. This animal was called the **sin offering**.

The same person then needed to have a 2<sup>nd</sup> lamb that was perfect. This was the **burnt offering**. He once again put his hand on the head of the animal. In picture form, the perfection of the animal was transferred back to the person. Obviously, this is only a picture because animals cannot take away sin or give perfection.

In the New Testament, Paul was a Jewish rabbi who knew all these details. Growing up as a Jewish man, he had offered these 2 animals many times at the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. When he put his faith in Jesus, he knew Jesus was the Lamb of God. So in one of his letters he explained the meaning of these 2 animals - the sin offering and the burnt offering.

In 2 Corinthians 5:21 Paul said,

*For God took the sinless Christ and poured onto Him our sins. The literal Greek says, God made Jesus to be the sin offering for us. God took the sinless Christ and poured onto Him our sins. Then in exchange, He poured God's goodness into us.*

This is the real meaning of the two offerings. On the cross, the sin of the world was “dumped” on Jesus. He was separated from the Father, so if we choose, we do not have to be separated from Him. When we tell Jesus we accept His payment, all of our unholiness and disobedience is put on the account of Jesus. In exchange, all of His holiness is transferred to our account. The animal sacrifices are a picture of Jesus and the exchange He offers to us.