

# Leviticus

## Lecture 6



# Leviticus 1

**1** <sup>a</sup>The LORD called Moses and spoke to him <sup>b</sup>from the tent of meeting, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, <sup>c</sup>When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of livestock from the herd or from the flock.

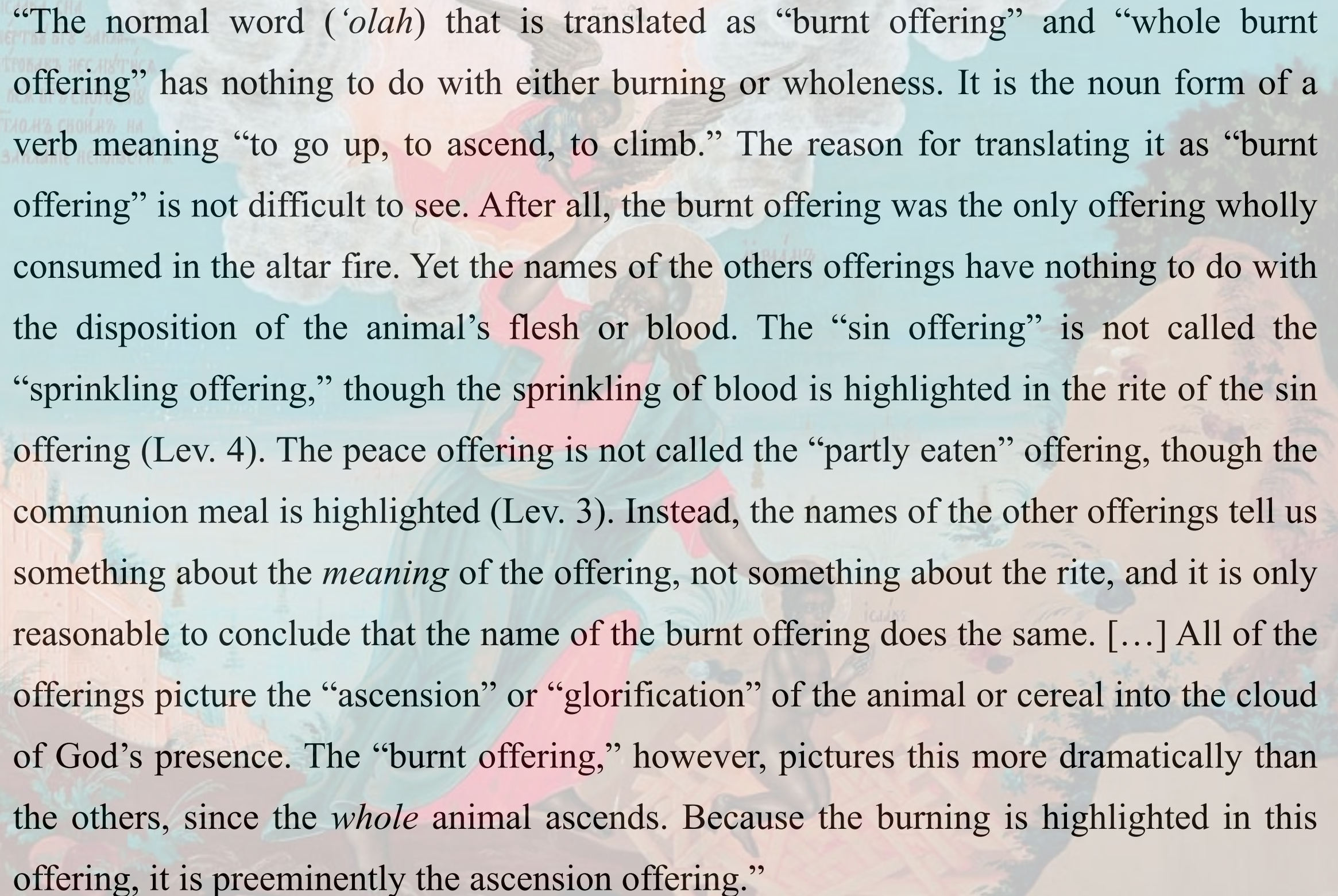
<sup>3</sup>“If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer <sup>d</sup>a male without blemish. He shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. <sup>4</sup> <sup>e</sup>He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be <sup>f</sup>accepted for him <sup>g</sup>to make atonement for him. <sup>5</sup> Then he shall kill the bull before the LORD, and Aaron’s sons the priests shall bring the blood <sup>h</sup>and throw the blood against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. <sup>6</sup> Then he shall flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces, <sup>7</sup> and the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and <sup>i</sup>arrange wood on the fire. <sup>8</sup> And Aaron’s sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head, and the fat, on the wood that is on the fire on the altar; <sup>9</sup> but its entrails and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as <sup>j</sup>a burnt offering, a food offering <sup>1</sup> with a <sup>k</sup>pleasing aroma to the LORD.

<sup>10</sup> “If his gift for a burnt offering is from the flock, from the sheep or goats, he shall bring a male without blemish, <sup>11</sup> <sup>l</sup>and he shall kill it on the north side of the altar before the LORD, and Aaron’s sons the priests shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar.

<sup>12</sup> And he shall cut it into pieces, with its head and its fat, and the priest shall arrange them on the wood that is on the fire on the altar, <sup>13</sup> but the entrails and the legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer all of it and burn it on the altar; it is <sup>j</sup>a burnt offering, a food offering with <sup>k</sup>a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

<sup>14</sup> “If his offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, then he shall bring his offering of <sup>m</sup>turtledoves or pigeons. <sup>15</sup> And the priest shall bring it to the altar and wring off its head and burn it on the altar. Its blood shall be drained out on the side of the altar. <sup>16</sup> He shall remove its crop with its contents <sup>2</sup> and cast it <sup>n</sup>beside the altar on the east side, in the place for ashes. <sup>17</sup> He shall tear it open by its wings, but <sup>o</sup>shall not sever it completely. And the priest shall burn it on the altar, on the wood that is on the fire. It is a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.





“The normal word (*‘olah*) that is translated as “burnt offering” and “whole burnt offering” has nothing to do with either burning or wholeness. It is the noun form of a verb meaning “to go up, to ascend, to climb.” The reason for translating it as “burnt offering” is not difficult to see. After all, the burnt offering was the only offering wholly consumed in the altar fire. Yet the names of the others offerings have nothing to do with the disposition of the animal’s flesh or blood. The “sin offering” is not called the “sprinkling offering,” though the sprinkling of blood is highlighted in the rite of the sin offering (Lev. 4). The peace offering is not called the “partly eaten” offering, though the communion meal is highlighted (Lev. 3). Instead, the names of the other offerings tell us something about the *meaning* of the offering, not something about the rite, and it is only reasonable to conclude that the name of the burnt offering does the same. [...] All of the offerings picture the “ascension” or “glorification” of the animal or cereal into the cloud of God’s presence. The “burnt offering,” however, pictures this more dramatically than the others, since the *whole* animal ascends. Because the burning is highlighted in this offering, it is preeminently the ascension offering.”

- Peter Leithart, “Skinned and Burned” in *Biblical Horizons*, No. 35, March 1992.



Unfortunately, the typical translation “unblemished” misses the symbolic import; used of human beings, the term is translated “blameless” or “whole-hearted,” and is set forth in scripture as a prerequisite for drawing near to the abode of YHWH, whether at his tabernacle/temple or at the summit of his holy mountain (Ps. 15:2; cf. Gen. 6:9; 17:1). [A]s such, the animal represents the blameless life able to draw near to YHWH’s Presence, consecrated on behalf of the worshiper, so that the Israelite approaches YHWH vicariously—likely, the hand-leaning rite established this substitutionary function [of the animal].

- L. Michael Morales, “Atonement in Ancient Israel: The Whole Burnt Offering as Central to Israel’s Cult” in *So Great a Salvation: A Dialogue on the Atonement in Hebrews*, 27-39.

The Israelite’s [...] leaning his hand heavily upon the animal’s head, is ‘a dramatic declaration that he is this animal, that it is taking his place in the ritual.’ Unable to ascend God’s holy mountain of himself, the Israelite will ascend *through* his blameless substitute—the [hand-leaning] rite establishes this necessary identification.

- L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?*, 129.



## The Ascension Offering

### Types of Animals

Herd = Bull (1:5)

Flock = Goat or Ram (1:10)

Bird = Turtledoves or Pigeons (x2)

### Steps in the Sacrificial Process\*

**Step 1:** The worshipper cuts the throat of the animal, causing it to bleed out (v. 5).

**Step 2:** Priests take the blood and throw it against the sides of the altar (v. 5).

**Step 3:** The worshipper cuts up the sacrifice (v. 6).

**Step 4:** The priests then arrange wood and fire on the altar (v. 7).

**Step 5:** Priests arrange the parts—the head and the fat—of the animal on the altar (v. 8)

**Step 6:** The priests wash the entrails and legs of the animal with water before placing them on the altar (v. 9).

**Step 7:** The priests burn all of the animal on the altar (v.9).

\*These steps were used when a herd or flock animal was offered. An offering of birds followed a different process.