

Leviticus Chapter 6

[Actually 6:8-30]

Sacrifice Regulations for the Priests – Part One



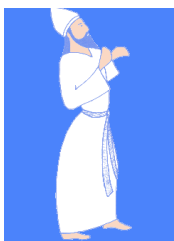
The book of Leviticus, up to this point, has been a handbook on the five basic sacrifices. Chapter 6, beginning with verse 8 through chapter 7, discusses these and a few other sacrificial regulations as if they were supplements to the first part of the book, but written especially for the priests. One emphasis is the additional requirements for the distribution and disposal of the flesh and other parts of the sacrifice, which were not burned on the altar. A second emphasis is to identify the places and portions that were acceptable to God as sacrificial meals. [Picture from www.specialityinterests.net]

Leviticus 6:8-13 The Priestly Regulations for the Burnt Offering

Since neither the worshipers nor the priests were to eat any of the burnt offering, it had to be completely burned up. This paragraph gives the priest seven specific commands about how to burn a burnt offering:

1. *The burnt offering itself shall remain on the hearth on the altar all night until the morning, and the fire on the altar is to be kept burning on it.*
2. *The priest is to put on his linen robe, and he shall put on undergarments next to his flesh.*
3. *He shall take up the ashes to which the fire reduces the burnt offering on the altar and place them beside the altar.*
4. *Then he shall take off his garments and put on other garments.*
5. [The priest shall] *carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place.*
6. *The priest shall burn wood on it [the altar] every morning; and he shall lay out the burnt offering on it, and offer up in smoke the fat portions of the peace offerings on it.*
7. *Fire shall be kept burning continually on the altar; it is not to go out.*

The emphasis here is on the burning. Everything is to be burned and the ashes are to be taken outside the camp. But inside the camp, the fire on the altar was to be continually burning, whether it was burning the animal, the fat portions, or just with wood. No application for this is offered in the text, but the most likely reason was to remind Israel of their continual need for a sacrifice for their sins. Unlike the sacrifice of Christ, there was no propitiation in the sacrifices of Israel (Hebrews 10:4; 1 John 2:2).



There is one other observation that can be made here which most commentators ignore. The priest had to change clothes for various parts of this procedure. The text even says he had to put on clean underwear. Again, the text does not give us the reason, so we can only speculate about the application. But it seems clear that cleanliness is important to God. The priest spent much time wrestling the carcasses of dead animals on the altar and cleaning out the ashes. This would make his garments bloody and full of ashes. But God wanted him to be clean. And not just as an

appearance to the people, because even his underwear was to be clean. Apparently, there is some sense in which “cleanliness is next to Godliness.” [Picture from www.messianic-torah-truth-seeker.org.]

Leviticus 6:14-18 The Priestly Regulations for the Grain Offering

The instructions here are nearly identical to those given in chapter 2, except they are given from the perspective of the priest rather than the worshiper. The term *most holy* in 6:17 refers only to the portion which could be eaten by the priest. Verse 18 says *Every male among the sons of Aaron may eat it; it is a permanent ordinance throughout your generations*. Apparently, the women and girls could not eat it. So it was an ordinance to be fulfilled, not a way for the priests to feed their families.

Leviticus 6:19-23 The Grain Offering for the Young Heir-Apparent Priest

This offering was not covered in chapter 2. There is a special grain offering *which Aaron and his sons are to present to the Lord on the day when he is anointed*. Apparently, this offering was to be prepared by the sons but presented by the father, the existing anointed priest. It was presented in the morning and evening and was not to be eaten because it was a sacrifice for the priests’ own sins. Some suggest this offering was to be presented every day.

Leviticus 6:24-30 The Priestly Regulations for the Sin Offering

This paragraph outlines three areas of instruction for the priests concerning the sin offering:

1. The manner in which it was to be eaten – in the Holy Place by the priests and his male relatives (6:26, 29).
2. The instruction for re-consecrating clothing accidentally touched by sacrificial blood, or vessel touched by sacrificial meat (6:27-28).
3. The prohibition of eating sacrificial meat when blood from that meat was used in the Tabernacle to make atonement in the Holy Place.

THOUGHTS AND APPLICATIONS

Our first thought in reading chapters 6 and 7 might be “But I’m not a priest – thank goodness.” But actually, the Apostle John says that Christ made us believers *priests to His God and Father* (Revelation 1:6). Of course, we are not Levitical priests doing sacrifices at a Tabernacle. So these verses are not commands for us, but they are to be applied to us. Here are some possibilities:

- In the same sense that the burnt offering was to be completely burned up, our service as believer-priests is used up serving God. It’s all about God. If I serve myself, I will be miserable. If I serve others, I will be happy but disappointed. If I serve God, I will be fulfilled.
- The continual fire in the altar indicates that we are to be continually focusing on our sinful condition and the need for the blood of Christ to cover our sins.
- The continual fire for continual sacrifices is also a contrast with Christ’s finished work on the cross. We should be constantly thankful to God that Christ’s death, unlike the animal sacrifices, was a propitiation – a satisfaction. God is satisfied with Christ’s sacrifice.
- The cleansing of the priest’s garments indicates that we, as believer-priests, are to be clean morally. We are the ones who represent ourselves, and others, to God. We don’t sacrifice for a sinner, but we lead them to Christ as God’s sacrifice. This priestly activity requires that we be cleaner than the world. We have a different standard of moral cleanliness.