

## ***International Bible Lessons Commentary***

### ***Leviticus 22:17-25, 31-33***

**New American Standard Bible**

***International Bible Lessons***

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The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, December 13, 2015**, is from **Leviticus 22:17-25, 31-33**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses *Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further* to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the **[International Bible Lessons Commentary](#)** website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. If you are a Bible student or teacher, you can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the **[International Bible Lesson Forum](#)**.

## ***International Bible Lesson Commentary***

### **Leviticus 22:17-25, 31-33**

**(Leviticus 22:17) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,**

In Genesis 3:1, the serpent asked, "Did God really say?" Ever since that day, the devil has tempted believers and unbelievers with that and similar questions. For example, "Can you really trust the Bible? Can you really trust the words of Moses, Jesus, Peter, and Paul? Did God really speak words by the Holy Spirit in the Bible? Did God really inspire the Bible as the Word of God? Did God really want you to obey Him in everything?" As Christians we believe, "The LORD said to Moses" and God speaks truly in the Bible.

**(Leviticus 22:18) "Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel and say to them, 'Any man of the house of Israel or of the aliens in Israel who presents his offering, whether it is any of their votive or any of their freewill offerings, which they present to the LORD for a burnt offering—**

Aaron and his sons and the Levites were the priests responsible for offering right sacrifices to God. Through Moses, the LORD wanted everyone to know the offerings that were acceptable to God. Israelites and foreigners (the people the New Testament calls "God fearers") were to offer the same type of sacrifices. A sacrifice to fulfill a vow had

more strict requirements than an offering freely given beyond what the law of God required. No one was required by God to give a freewill offering to God.

**(Leviticus 22:19) for you to be accepted—it must be a male without defect from the cattle, the sheep, or the goats.**

God wanted believers to give their best to Him. The sacrifices God commanded in the Old Testament were to point to the coming sacrifice of God's Son, Jesus Christ. God always gives what is best in every situation, and the requirements God gave through Moses give some of the details regarding the best that those offering sacrifices were to give. Some might not know what the best sacrifices were without specific instructions.

**(Leviticus 22:20) 'Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it will not be accepted for you.**

The sacrifice God required must be a male. God required a male sacrifice, because He would send a male sacrifice, His Son, as a sacrifice for our sins. God has forbidden His people from offering human sacrifices, so the sacrifice had to be from the cattle, sheep, or goats. An animal with a blemish or defect might be thought of as less valuable; so people were not to give what is less valuable to them as a sacrifice to God. God gives His best and He wants our best. When God forbid human sacrifice and substituted animal sacrifice for human sacrifice, He began to point toward the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ, God's Son: Jesus freely came and died as a substitute sacrifice for us, because we deserved to die for our sins and God wanted to justly and mercifully forgive us for our sins.

**(Leviticus 22:21) 'When a man offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD to fulfill a special vow or for a freewill offering, of the herd or of the flock, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it.**

When God sent Jesus, He was and is the unblemished, perfect, acceptable sacrifice. God teaches in the New Testament: "How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!" (Hebrews 9:14) and "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake" (1 Peter 1:18-20). When Jesus came, God fulfilled the promises and vows He made in the Old Testament. God the Father was not compelled to send Jesus, and Jesus came freely and by the grace of God He died as a sacrifice for sinners.

**(Leviticus 22:22) 'Those that are blind or fractured or maimed or having a running sore or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make of them an offering by fire on the altar to the LORD.**

Those bringing sacrifices needed to know that the priests and God would not accept their “cast offs” or those animals that had no value to them or little value in the marketplace. It costs nothing to give to God what is of no value. The priests were to look for the defects in a sacrifice, and could refuse an unacceptable sacrifice. By the time of Malachi, these requirements were disregarded by priests and people: “When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?’ says the LORD Almighty.” (Malachi 1:8).

**(Leviticus 22:23) ‘In respect to an ox or a lamb which has an overgrown or stunted member, you may present it for a freewill offering, but for a vow it will not be accepted.**

An ox (a castrated bull) or a physically deformed sheep or ox is acceptable as a freewill offering. A freewill offering could be blemished in these ways because it was freely given and would be eaten on a festive occasion by the one making the offering and his family and friends. An ox that had outlived its usefulness could be given as a freewill offering to be eaten. Because it had been castrated, an ox could not be offered to the Lord as an offering in fulfillment of a vow. The rule might indicate that the ox had less or no value toward the end of its life and could not reproduce new life of monetary value for its owner; thus, the one making the sacrifice would be offering to God what was of no value to him personally and could be discarded without cost to him. God refused to accept offerings given with such intentions and disregard for His holiness.

**(Leviticus 22:24) ‘Also anything with its testicles bruised or crushed or torn or cut, you shall not offer to the LORD, or sacrifice in your land,**

This command indicates that an ox could not be offered to the Lord. The command indicates that the believer is not to offer to the Lord only those animals (or possessions, for believers today) that have no value or future value to them. For example, a worn out, threadbare, filthy carpet should not be given to a church because it has no value to you.

**(Leviticus 22:25) nor shall you accept any such from the hand of a foreigner for offering as the food of your God; for their corruption is in them, they have a defect, they shall not be accepted for you.’”**

The offering of God, His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, had no defects and was of infinite value. Jesus was morally and spiritually perfect; therefore, He could be the perfect sacrifice for our sins. God always does far more than we could ever expect or hope to do for ourselves. God set the example for this command when Jesus came. We are not to give God what is defective.

**(Leviticus 22:31) “So you shall keep My commandments, and do them; I am the LORD.**

Because God said, “I am the LORD,” believers keep God’s commands and try to observe them in detail. God has not changed and God has not changed His moral law, the law of

love. Because of God's loving gift of grace to us in Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for our sins, God has won our love: we love to obey God and obey God out of love for God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ; furthermore, the Holy Spirit fills us with love for God and enables us to obey God's commands.

**(Leviticus 22:32) “You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be sanctified among the sons of Israel; I am the LORD who sanctifies you,**

God commanded that His Name should not be treated with irreverence or disrespect. God's Name is the revelation of God's character and nature. God is holy and God is not to be treated in an unholy way or spoken of in an unholy way or His name used in an unholy way. God's moral laws are not to be disregarded, but believers are to reveal God as the holy God that God has revealed himself to be. After God makes us holy, we can reveal that God is holy. Christians do not sacrifice bulls, sheep, and goats today, but God still requires them to sacrifice. Paul wrote: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship” (Romans 12:1). As Paul also wrote, God requires believers to offer themselves to Him without blemish: “Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, ‘children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation’. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain” (Philippians 2:14-16). Peter wrote that false teachers and those who profane God's name can blemish the body of Christ, the church: “But these people blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like animals they too will perish. They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you” (2 Peter 2:12-13).

**(Leviticus 22:33) who brought you out from the land of Egypt, to be your God; I am the LORD.”**

God sanctified or made holy or set apart for holy use the Israelites that He brought out of Egypt. They were to be a kingdom of priests: “Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites” (Exodus 19:5-6). Through the sacrifice of Jesus for us, believers are brought out of captivity to sin and Satan and set apart for holy use as a kingdom of priests. John wrote: “and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen” (Revelation 1:5-6). And Peter also revealed: “Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, ‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,’ and, ‘A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.’ They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's

special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy” (1 Peter 2:7-10).

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. What type of offering was optional with less strict requirements than other sacrifices?
2. What do the Old Testament sacrifices point toward?
3. Why do you think God instituted and gave specific rules for sacrifices to the Israelites?
4. What is one thing you have learned or consider important about giving from your study of these Scripture texts?
5. What kind of sacrifices does God require of Christians today?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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