

Leviticus 1:10-13

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/lev/lev-1/leviticus-110-13/>

The LORD gives Moses instructions for burnt offerings that are from the flock, sheep or goats.

All of these instructions for a burnt *offering from the flock* mirror the previously given instructions for the burnt offerings *from the herd*, except that they contain an additional provision that *flock* animals should be slain *on the side of the altar northward*. The north side of the altar may have been designated for slaughter, blood, and other parts not being offered on the altar.

The text does not say why this provision to sacrifice *northward* was given for the sacrifices from the *flock* and not the *herd*. It may have applied to both but only mentioned here. Another possibility is it presages Jesus' crucifixion. The precise location of Jesus' crucifixion is unknown, but it is possible Jesus was crucified along the main road on the north side of Jerusalem. This *northward* command could presage The Lamb of God's death on the north side of the city. Hebrews 13:11-13 tell us that Jesus suffered death "outside the gate" (of the city), and this was foreshadowed by the requirement to burn the hides of sin offerings outside the camp (Exodus 29:14). It does seem that every detail foreshadowed Jesus' life and death in some respect. While it would make sense and be consistent with known practice for Rome to place their victims along this busy road north of the city in order to create the desired deterrence effect, the actual location is unknown.

Just as with the herd, the *flock* sacrifices are to be a *male without defect*, just as Jesus was a *male without defect*.

Later in Leviticus 1, we will see that on the east side of the altar is the *place of the ashes*. With hundreds or thousands of Israelites coming to offer their sacrifices, things could get very messy if proper order was not maintained. It would have been important to keep ashes on one side of the altar and blood on another. Then as with the herd animals, the *priests* are to *sprinkle its blood around on the altar*.

He shall then cut it into its pieces with its head and its suet. The "suet" is the fat located on the kidneys and loins. The Jewish sages discuss this statement at length. They state that the *head* and *suet* are mentioned separately from the other pieces here because when *Aaron's sons the priests* would *arrange* the body parts on *the wood which is on the fire that is on the altar* they would place the *head and its suet* together, apart from the other *pieces*, covering the place of slaughter (i.e. the cut on the throat) with the *suet*. The sages determined this was done out of respect to God and His creation.

The statement, *The entrails, however, and the legs he shall wash with water*, further shows the respect that was to be shown to the offering even after death. When the animal was *cut into its pieces* it would have been easy to mistakenly puncture the stomach or intestines, releasing waste

onto the *entrails* and *legs* of the offering. God wanted these washed and kept intact prior to being arranged on the altar.

Then, the priests are instructed to *arrange them on the wood, the wood on the fire, and fire on the altar*. This unusual wording, showing a “stacking” of components, might be a foreshadowing as to what type of death was determined for God’s own Son. He was on a wooden cross, and judgment (often represented by fire) was poured out upon Him there. Abraham also bound Isaac his beloved son and placed him on the wood which was upon the altar. Isaac was spared the fire by God’s intervention and provision of the ram (Genesis 22:11-13).

The fact that the priest is asked to *arrange* the body parts further emphasizes orderliness and respect for the life of the animal. Then *the priest* is instructed to *offer all of it up in smoke on the altar*. This means this particular offering of ascent is offered in its entirety on the altar with fire. The phrase *it is a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD* emphasizes the root word translated *burnt offering*, which is “oleh” and means “ascend.” The sacrifice is to be cooked on the altar such that the smoke “ascends” and creates the imagery that it is ascending to God, and He will be pleased by its *soothing aroma*. The sacrifice is said to go up as a *soothing aroma to the LORD*, which speaks of the function of the *burnt offering* sacrifice, to make an “atonement” for sin (Leviticus 1:4).

Some interpret the *burnt offering* to be an offering that was completely charred, which would make it inedible. However, Deuteronomy 12:21,27 indicates the *burnt offerings* of the herd and flock were eaten. It seems the passages that command the Israelites to completely burn up the offering include a specific instruction to do so, such as the command they be “burned with fire” (Leviticus 6:30; 7:17;7:19).

Biblical Text

10 ‘But if his offering is from the flock, of the sheep or of the goats, for a burnt offering, he shall offer it a male without defect. 11 He shall slay it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD, and Aaron’s sons the priests shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. 12 He shall then cut it into its pieces with its head and its suet, and the priest shall arrange them on the wood which is on the fire that is on the altar. 13 The entrails, however, and the legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer all of it, and offer it up in smoke on the altar; it is a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.