

# Leviticus 1:2-3

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/lev/lev-1/leviticus-12-3/>

*God commands Moses to speak to the sons of Israel and declare which types of animals He accepts as offerings. Sacrificial land animals can be chosen from cattle (the herd), as well as sheep and goats (the flock). Later in this chapter the types of sacrificial birds are listed. Three details are given for burnt offerings of the flock or herd. They 1. Must be an unblemished animal, 2. Must be a male, and 3. Must be offered in front of the Tabernacle.*

God directs *Moses* to *speak* or relay the following information *to the sons of Israel*. God is honoring the request made by the Israelites, that He would speak to them indirectly through Moses: “Then they said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die” (Exodus 20:19).

Throughout scripture, we see God raise up a prophet, or a judge, or a deliverer to relay His words to His people. Today we have the words of all the Old Testament prophets and judges as well as the words of Jesus and the writers of the New Testament. Jesus was the “prophet like Moses” whose coming was foretold in Deuteronomy 18:15:

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.”

Deuteronomy 18:15 is fulfilled in Jesus. He spoke the words of God directly, human to human. As opposed to God speaking from Mount Sinai, which terrified the people. Further, Jesus is the word of God made flesh (John 1:1).

The information God directed Moses to *speak to the sons of Israel* related to sacrifices, and begins with the introduction: *When any man of you brings an offering to the LORD*. The Hebrew word for *offering* here is “corban” which is a gift intended as a sacrifice to God. It comes from the Hebrew root “carav” which means to “draw near.” The Hebrew the word “cherubim” also shares this same root.

Jesus uses the Hebrew word “corban” in Mark 7:11: “But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is corban”—’ (that is, a gift to God),”

Mark, the author of the gospel of Mark, left the word “corban” untranslated to show us that in the time of Jesus, in a Greek-and-Aramaic-speaking society, the Hebrew “corban” was an important rabbinic technical term, necessary to retain.

The only land animals permitted to be sacrificed as *an offering* were to be from the *herd or flock*. The *herd* would refer to cattle, the *flock* to sheep or goats.

Sheep and goats are both considered *flock* animals, yet their behavior is quite different. A sheep has an instinctive nature to follow a shepherd or a lead animal (such as a donkey). Goats, on the other hand, are independent, stubborn, and can be destructive. We are often likened to sheep in scripture, with Jesus as our good shepherd. Upon Jesus' return, He will divide the nations as goats and sheep are divided (Matthew 25:31-33.)

Leviticus 1:3 describes three requirements for a *burnt offering*:

1. You must have the right animal (a *male* from the *herd* or *flock*)
2. in the right condition (*without defect*) and
3. it must be offered in the right place (*the doorway to the tent of meeting*).

The sacrifice was presented before the LORD (and accepted or rejected by the priest) at *the doorway of the tent of meeting*. It was within the *tent of meeting*, in the holiest place, where God's presence dwelt. The bronze altar for burnt offerings was also conveniently located at the *doorway to the tent of meeting* so that after the *sons of Israel* presented their offering *before the LORD* and slaughtered it, the priest could promptly arrange the body parts on the altar in preparation for the burnt offering.

This likely symbolized Jesus, who offered Himself as the ultimate sacrifice, as the Lamb of God, who took away the sins of the world (John 1:29). He was *male*. Jesus was *without defect*, without sin. He was "lifted up" on the cross, as the altar was elevated (John 3:14-16, Exodus 38:1). Jesus' sacrifice opened the way for each person to spiritually enter the true Holy of Holies in heaven (Matthew 27:51; Hebrews 10:19-22). The cross could represent a type of altar with a sacrifice upon wood.

The animal was presented at *the doorway to the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD*. This could be said another way, "That he may be accepted to come near into the presence of the Lord." In ancient culture, if you were going into the presence of a dignitary or king, you would not want to be empty-handed. A gift of honor would usually accompany a person approaching an earthly king. How much more the King of Kings?

God provided a way for His inheritance, the Israelite people, to draw near to Him despite their sins. The *burnt offering* (offering of ascension) provided an atonement so that the people could enjoy fellowship with their King (Leviticus 1:4). As the book of Hebrews points out, these sacrifices had to be offered continually: the people would have to eventually return for further atonement in the future after more sins were committed. But Jesus addressed both issues. He offered Himself, which is the ultimate atonement, and now is available to be approached directly to receive forgiveness for sins to restore fellowship (1 John 1:9; Hebrews 10:19-23). He also wrote the Law on the hearts of New Testament believers through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31.

### **Biblical Text**

**2 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When any man of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of animals from the herd or the flock. 3 If his**

**offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer it, a male without defect; he shall offer it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD.**