



God Ordains the Sacrificial System

Leviticus 1–7



LESSON GOAL

Students will understand that God's holiness requires a sacrifice for sinful man.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- God is holy
- God requires sacrifice for sin
- Christ was the perfect sacrifice for sin

KEY VERSE

“Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him” (Leviticus 1:4).

APPLICATION

- Trust Jesus to take your punishment.
- Live a holy life by obeying parents and leaders.
- Praise God by giving Him your best effort and attitudes.

NEXT WEEK

God Establishes the Priesthood
Read Leviticus 9:22–10:7.

Symbol Key



Craft



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Activity



Q & A



Work Sheet



2 Grade Level

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

After looking at the history of sacrifice before the giving of the Law, four sacrifices will be examined: the burnt offering, the meal offering, the peace offering, and the sin offering. These offerings will (respectively) teach dependence on a substitutionary death, the dedication of one’s life in grateful obedience, the joy of peace and fellowship with God, and the forgiveness that believers have in Christ.

Reading Leviticus can be surprising to New Testament saints who have become accustomed to the privilege of coming into God’s presence through the blood of Jesus Christ. The thought that the smoke of a burning animal could please God is shockingly strange. The image of the mass amounts of blood is sobering. The picture of a priest separating the fat and washing entrails may actually be nauseous to some. But the reader must not think that the Israelites found these sacrificial laws strange or new.

The very first children born into this world were taught that God was approachable only through sacrifice. Cain soon learned that God required not only a sacrifice, but also a sacrifice brought in the right heart. Abel’s offering was more excellent than Cain’s because it was offered in faith (Heb. 11:4). Abel brought his offering in an attitude of submission and dependence on God.

The pattern of godly men bringing godly sacrifices continues throughout Genesis. God commanded Noah to bring seven of each clean animal onto the ark; these animals would later be used for sacrifice (Gen. 7:2). The first thing Noah did upon leaving the ark was to build an altar and offer sacrifices. The sacrifices were a soothing aroma to God. God was pleased with Noah’s understanding that his continued relationship with Him was based on shed blood. Escaping from God’s wrath led Noah to continue in righteous worship of God.

Abraham “believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:6). Abraham expressed faith by submitting to God’s ordained method of coming before Him in sacrifice. Abraham repeatedly built altars to the Lord. When God called him to offer Isaac, Abraham showed the extent of his dependence and willingness to serve as God required. He was even willing to sacrifice his own son. Abraham, to whom God had already imputed righteousness, is the perfect portrayal of the right attitude that would accompany a godly sacrifice: faith, obedience, dependence, submission, trust, and love of God.

By the time the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai, they had already offered the Passover lamb; they had been redeemed from the angel of death through the lamb’s blood. The covenant with God had been ratified through sacrifices and the sprinkling of blood (Exod. 24:5–8). The Israelites had learned to worship God through sacrifice, the way that godly men had always done. Although the specifications for sacrifices in Leviticus were new, faithful, righteous men had always approached God by submitting themselves to God’s righteous requirements of sacrifice.

Additional Reference Materials

*The MacArthur Study
Bible* by John MacArthur

Holiness to the Lord
by Allen P. Ross

The Burnt Offering

Purpose: The burnt offering was offered so that the worshiper could participate in communion with God. It was not offered for the forgiveness of a particular sin. Instead, the sacrifice was made in appreciation of the fact that communion with God is experienced only through shed blood.

Description: The burnt offering is so called because the entire animal was burnt; unlike other sacrifices, neither the priest nor the worshiper ate any part. The complete burning of the animal symbolized the worshiper's complete submission and God's complete acceptance. A spotless sacrifice was brought in free will by the worshiper. Depending on the financial ability of the worshiper, either a bull, sheep, goat, or bird was brought. With the larger animals, the worshiper, not the priest, laid his hand on the animal's head and killed the animal. The animal's blood was sprinkled on the sides of the altar by the priest to show that the animal's blood had been shed and its life taken. The result of the sacrifice was atonement (Lev. 1:4). Atonement means "covered" or "cleansed;" it is closely linked throughout Leviticus with forgiveness. This sacrifice was not for any particular sin to be forgiven; instead, it demonstrated that God's presence could be entered only by sacrifice. The burnt offering was "a sweet aroma to the LORD" (1:9). God was pleased by the worshiper who in faith recognized that communion with God was possible only through sacrifice.

Focus: An Israelite who wanted to participate in communion with God could do so only through a burnt offering. The Israelite laid his hand on the animal to show that his guilt was being transferred to the animal, and then killed the animal (Lev. 1:4–5). The animal died in place of the worshiper. The sprinkled blood spoke of the atoning work of the sacrifice. The burning of the animal spoke of God's acceptance. The worshiper who faithfully brought a burnt offering depended on God's faithfulness to accept the sacrifice offered in obedience. The New Testament believer must depend on the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ to enjoy communion with God.

The Grain Offering

Purpose: The grain offering was offered by those who enjoyed communion with God as a sign of dedication to Him. It was a returning to God of what He had bountifully provided. There was no blood in this offering, and thus no atonement was made.

Description: The grain offering was offered in several forms, either cooked or uncooked. It consisted of flour and oil and was offered along with frankincense. Only a portion of the offering was burnt; the rest belonged to the priests. The grain offering could be offered with neither leaven nor honey, both of which could induce fermentation and symbolized sin. Salt was offered along with the grain offering; its presence may suggest a commitment to keeping the covenant. A special type of grain offering was the firstfruits. This offering was brought at special festivals. Offering the first growth of the crops testified that God was responsible for the harvest. The result of the grain offering being burnt was a sweet aroma to the Lord. Admission of dependence and the offering of dedication pleased the Lord.

Focus: The grain offering showed the worshiper's understanding that all he had was from and due to God. The offering was to come from the overflow of a life consecrated to God. New Testament saints must similarly be dedicated to God. Whatever form their offering of obedience takes, it must come from an appreciative, committed heart. The worshiper who understands that his life is the work of God's grace will offer that life back to God, without corruption or reservation.

The Peace Offering

Purpose: The peace offering was offered when the worshiper wanted to celebrate his relationship with God either by offering thanks, in fulfillment of a vow, or simply out of free will and love for God (Lev. 7:11–14).

Description: The animals that could be offered were cattle, sheep, or goats (male or female), and all had to be without blemish. The process was similar to that of the burnt offering: the worshiper laid his hand on the animal's head and killed it, and the priest sprinkled blood on the altar. But instead of the whole animal being burnt, only the fat around the entrails and the kidneys (Lev. 3:3–4) was burnt. The smell was pleasing to God. The breast and right thigh of the animal were given to the priest for food. The bringer of the sacrifice and the other worshipers in the tabernacle could eat the rest of the food (Lev. 7:15–17). The worshipers were allowed to celebrate their peace with God in an actual feast.

Focus: God graciously allowed the Israelites to celebrate His goodness to them with a feast. The joy of such a sacrifice cannot be overlooked. While the worshiper had to come to God through a substitutionary death, he was then allowed to participate with God in the sacrifice. The feast was enjoyed with God. While God was pleased with the burning of the best fatty parts, the worshiper was pleased to participate in fellowship with God and enjoy His provision. What powerful communion! The New Testament saint must not let any sin impede on his sweet fellowship with God and other believers. The believer has peace with God through the blood of Christ. Joy should be the overflow of the heart, that has tasted of the Bread of Life.

The Sin Offering

Purpose: The sin offering was offered for a number of situations in which the person's relationship with God was interrupted because of sin. To be reconciled to God, the person needed to have his sins forgiven. The sin offering was for sins that were committed unintentionally or unknowingly. For intentional, willful, or blatant sins, there was no sacrifice that could be offered.

Description: The first description of the sin offering is found in Leviticus 4:1–35. The type of animal that was offered depended on the transgressor's position and finances. Priests were representatives of the people and were to be a spiritual example to them. When a priest sinned, he was required to offer a large sacrifice such as a bull or goat. Those who were considered to be part of the common people were required to offer either a female goat, a lamb, two turtledoves, two young pigeons, or a tenth of an ephah of flour (Lev. 5:11). With animals larger than a bird, the guilty laid his hand upon the animal and killed it, signifying his identification in the animal's death. Only some of the blood was put on the horns of the altar, purifying the tabernacle of the person's sin. For the sin of a priest or the whole congregation, blood was sprinkled before the veil partitioning the Holy of Holies and smeared on the altar of incense because the sin was more severe; the impurity had more severely profaned the tabernacle than if only an individual had sinned. The rest of the blood was poured out. Only the fat and kidneys were burned; the smell was pleasing to God, showing that God had accepted the sacrifice. The rest of the animal was burned outside the camp. The result of the sacrifice was that atonement was made by the sacrifice; the offender was forgiven.

Focus: The sin offering was offered to achieve reconciliation between the lawbreaker and the Lawgiver. Only death could lead to forgiveness. The offense was laid on the sacrificial animal. Because the sacrifice had been made, the tabernacle was purified, the sinner was forgiven, and God was pleased. God is still pleased by the sacrifice of His Son. New Testament believers must continually rely

on the atoning blood of Christ for forgiveness of their sins. The believer can enjoy restoration with God not by resacrificing Christ (who died once for all), but by trusting that Christ was sacrificed for a believer's sin. Such serious faith will lead to repentance.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth"
(Psalm 78:1).

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Sacrifices Review

Use A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards to review the sacrifices that took place before Leviticus. In the Old Testament, God instituted the sacrifice to prepare people for the coming ultimate sacrifice, Jesus Christ. The first example of sacrifice found in the Bible is in Genesis 3:21. Because of Adam and Eve's sin God killed an animal to cover their nakedness. In Genesis 4, Cain and Abel brought their offerings of sacrifice to the Lord. Cain brought some of his produce, and Abel brought the best of his animals. Abel's offering was acceptable because he brought it in obedience to the Lord. His sacrifice was the best of what God had blessed him with. Cain brought what he wanted rather than what God asked for. That was not an acceptable sacrifice to God. Noah, after coming off the ark, worshiped God by making an altar and sacrificing some of the clean animals to the Lord (Gen. 8:20). Abraham's faith was confirmed through his obedience to sacrifice his son. God graciously provided a ram caught in the thicket to take the place of Isaac as the sacrifice. God designed sacrifice to teach and prepare people for the coming sacrifice. Jesus Christ was the ultimate sacrifice. His death on the cross atoned forever for the sins of the world. He died to cover the sins of man. He was spotless and without blemish. God demonstrated His great love for man by sending His Son to die as a substitute.



Two Pictures of Holiness

It is difficult to describe what God is like because nothing here on earth is really like Him. The word *holy* means "set apart." When God says He is holy, He means that He is different and pure. Following are two pictures of God's holiness. These are important for the coming weeks because the book of Leviticus revolves around the holiness of God. God tells the Israelites in Leviticus 19:2, "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy." In many ways, the people of Israel were to imitate God's holiness and show the surrounding nations what God was like by how they acted. Repeat these ideas throughout the coming weeks.

Holy means pure: God is pure in all ways but especially in the sense of being sinless. God has no spot of sin in Him. He always does what is right, and He never sins. Use three pieces of white paper to illustrate the concept of purity. Before class, use a black marker to fill the first page with dots. The dots represent sin. On the second page, put only three to five dots. Leave the third page completely white. During class, hold up the page filled with black spots; tell the students that this page is not pure. It has many black dots. These dots represent sin and disobedience. Our lives are full of sin. Then, hold up the page with only a few dots. Ask

which page is purer, the first or second. Then hold up the page with no marks at all. This represents God. God has no sin. As a matter of fact, God will punish all sins. Anything that is not sinless will be punished. God asked Israel to be pure from sin. He wanted them to stop sinning.

Holy means different: God is completely different from anything else. His power is different, His wisdom is different, and His goodness is different. Bring a book, a pencil, a spoon, and a picture of a person to class. First, hold up the pencil and a book. Ask the students whether these two items are the same. Ask them how they are different. Then tell them how they are the same. (They both are made of wood, etc.) Then, hold up the book and the spoon. Ask them whether these two things are the same. They are very different. (One is made of metal; one is made of wood.) Emphasize that God is completely different from anything else—a little like a spoon is different than a book. Have different students hold up the book, pencil, and picture. Ask them whether any of these are like God. No. God is completely different from anything. He is not sinful like we are. God is holy. He is pure and without sin. He asks us to be pure and without sin, too. But we cannot on our own. We have no way to get rid of our sin. In Leviticus, we will see how God helped the people become holy.



Why a Sacrifice?

God is holy. Because God is holy, He punishes all sin. Every sin a person commits will be punished by God. A sacrifice is a reminder that our sin deserves punishment. Animal sacrifices were a reminder that someone needed to die for sin. When a person offered a sacrifice in the Old Testament, he believed in God's promise to overlook his sin. Over time, the Israelites were told that someone would come and pay for their sins. In Isaiah 53, God shows that the Messiah would come and pay the penalty for sin. That person is Jesus Christ. Jesus' death would be the final sacrifice for sin.



Breaking the Chain

Sin breaks the relationship link between man and holy God. The Lord has declared a sacrifice necessary for forgiveness and restoration of the relationship. Illustrate this for the students by breaking or removing a link from a paper chain. Repair the chain by inserting a red paper link. Explain that by offering the sacrifices God desired, Israel, though sinful, could maintain fellowship with God.



Sin's Debt

Materials: play money or large jar of pennies

Directions: Ask the students whether they know what the word *debt* means. Try to illustrate a debt by pretending to loan someone play money. Explain that we all owe a huge debt to God because of our sin. We can never pay this debt, not even a penny, but God sent His Son to pay our sin's debt for us. Explain that in today's lesson, they will learn how God instructed Israel to pay for their sin debt before Jesus died on the cross.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done” (Psalm 78:4).

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Reading of the Text

Read portions of Leviticus 1–7.

The heart of the Bible is Jesus Christ. He made the most important sacrifice to save men from their sin. God sent Jesus Christ, His Son, to live on earth as a human being. While He was here on earth, He lived a sinless life. Does anyone know what “sinless” means? It means that Jesus lived a perfect life; everything He thought and did pleased His Father, God. How many of you live a perfect life? Have you ever been bad? Jesus, as He was growing up, did not disobey His parents at all. In fact, when He became a grown up, He never disobeyed His Heavenly Father at all either. Jesus Christ was sinless. Because He was sinless, He could be a perfect substitute and sacrifice for all of us.

It is very important to remember that Jesus Christ needed to die on the cross in order to save us. The Bible says that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23) which means that as sinners, we deserve to die because we disobey God. Death is the punishment for sin. Jesus, because He lived a sinless life, was the perfect substitute for us. He died on the cross so that we do not have to and was punished in our place. This sacrifice was what God wanted so that we could be saved and be able to have a relationship with Him.

Throughout the Old Testament, there were many different kinds of sacrifices because Jesus had not yet died for our sins. Some sacrifices were for sin. Other sacrifices were used to say “thank you” to God. Sometimes, sacrifices were done to make a promise to God. But really, all the different types of sacrifices had one thing in common: they were to help people have a relationship with God. Why were sacrifices needed to have a relationship with God?

One type of sacrifice is called a grain offering. [Bring brown rice or other types of grain to show to the students.] Some of the Israelites were farmers. To show how grateful they were to God, they brought their first crops (or the first grains that they harvested) and offered them to God. It is like our own offering, except we do it with money. Your parents work so that they can earn money to buy food and clothes for you. When they come to church, they offer some of that money to God as a “thank you” for all that God has provided for the family. This sacrifice helps to show that God gives us everything we have and that we should be grateful to Him.

Another kind of sacrifice was the peace offering, where people would make a promise to their heavenly Father to show how grateful they were. This time, animals were offered to God. But these animals had to be special and have nothing wrong with them. The blood from the animals was sprinkled on the altar

to cleanse it, while the best parts of the animal were burnt. The Bible says that the smell from the burnt offerings was pleasing to God. Other parts of the animal were given to the priest. The people brought food as well and had a feast. In this offering, the death of the animal became a “substitutionary death.” Unlike the grain offering, the peace offering required that the worshiper cleanse himself before he could come before God. That is why the blood of the slain animal was sprinkled on the altar. It was to show that the worshiper acknowledged he was a sinner and needed God’s forgiveness.

The third type of sacrifice was called a burnt offering. This type of offering was not offered for forgiveness of a sin, but was meant to reveal a thankful heart. This type of sacrifice was different because the whole animal was burnt or offered to God. It showed that the person was willing to give everything to God to show that everything belongs to God.

The fourth type of sacrifice was the sin offering. This type of sacrifice was offered when the worshiper had sinned and was not in a right relationship with God. The person has to lay his hand on the animal to show that the animal was killed because of his sin. Some of the blood from the animal was placed on the “horns” of the altar to purify it. The blood was sprinkled before the veil that hid the “Holy of Holies,” where God dwelt in the tabernacle. This process was very serious. The reason for the sacrifice was to show that the punishment of sin is death. God’s law requires us all to live a perfect life, and we sin when we fail to meet God’s holy standard. Because God is just, there needs to be a punishment for breaking His law, and that punishment is death. In the sacrifice, the person showed that he realized his sin was awful and repented from it. It is important to note that it was God, out of His mercy, who allowed the animal to die instead of the sinner. He accepted a “substitute” to receive the penalty of sin in order for the sinner to be forgiven. This sacrifice may seem awful but, to God, sin is just as awful.

The one major problem with these sacrifices is that they were temporary. God’s people had to do them over and over again because they kept sinning over and over again. Sin prevents us from having a relationship with God; it is like a wall that separates us from God. Before Christ came to earth, the Israelites needed to have priests who would talk to God for them. The Israelites could not have direct contact with God. The veil that separated the Israelites from the “Holy of Holies” where God dwelt is a symbol of this barrier caused by our sin.

These offerings were requirements for God’s people, the Israelites. The good news is that we no longer have to do any of those things. We do not need the blood of animals to cleanse us from our sins. We simply need to repent and believe in Jesus Christ. God loves us so much that He gave His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins. When we have faith in Christ, it does not just mean that we believe He lived. It also means that we have faith that Christ died for our sins and was the “substitutionary offering.” Just like the Israelites, who believed that God accepted the sacrifice of animals or grains and that they were forgiven after the offering, so we should have faith that Jesus Christ died for us. Once we repent, place our faith in Christ’s death and resurrection, and believe in God’s mercy, we can enjoy communion with God.



Lesson Questions

What is a sacrifice?

A sacrifice is an offering to God of something we cannot use again.

What kinds of sacrifices were there in Leviticus?

Grain offerings, burnt offerings, peace offerings, and sin offerings.

What was the sin offering?

The sin offering was the sacrifice of an animal, showing that sin needs to be punished.

Why did people need to make sin offerings?

Because every person is a sinner, and all sin must be punished.

Who was the final sacrifice for sin?

Jesus. He died once for all sin. Christians do not need to make sacrifices. They need to repent and trust Jesus for forgiveness.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



Sacrifice Props

Make or gather the following props to use during the lesson: an altar (*The MacArthur Study Bible*, page 134, for a picture of the altar), ashes for burnt offerings, stuffed animals for animal sacrifices, flour for grain offerings, and plates and picnic utensils for the peace offering.

Praise and Worship

Holy, Holy

Nothing but the Blood of Jesus

Rejoice in the Lord Always

Trust and Obey



Sacrifice for Sin

When we sin and disobey,
(Point to self and shake head back and forth.)

There is a great big debt to pay.
(Hold arms wide open.)

Before Jesus, animals died.
(Hold fingers in a cross shape.)

Their blood and bodies sacrificed.
(Make a sawing motion with hand.)

But we no longer sacrifice,
(Shake head and wag finger back and forth.)

For Jesus' blood has paid sin's price.
(Point to palms, one at a time; point to self.)

So pray that you will not forget:
(Hold palms together; point to temple.)

Jesus died to pay our debt.
(Hold fingers in a cross shape.)

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments” (Psalm 78:7).

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



Paid in Full

Materials: pennies, play money, copies of the “Paid in Full” activity sheet, markers, liquid glue

Directions: Give each student a “Paid in Full” activity sheet. Have him color the bubble letters. Then give him pennies and play money to glue around the edges of the sheet. Tell the students that there is a price for sin. That price is death (Rom. 6:23). Jesus paid the price for sin when He died on the cross.



Sin Covered

Materials: cutout paper dolls, black and red crayons, pencils

Directions: As the students work on this craft, review the lesson with each step. Then encourage the students to retell the story at home, using the images they decorated. Each student needs three paper dolls. Label the first one “SIN.” Have the students color this one entirely black to illustrate the darkness of sin. Label the second one “SACRIFICE.” Have the students color this one entirely red to represent the blood sacrifices they learned about in today’s lesson. Label the third one “FORGIVEN” and write the reference Leviticus 4:27–35 at the bottom. This one could be left white or colored and decorated beautifully. Staple all three together, with the black one at the bottom, the red one in the middle, and the white one on the top. Tell students that we all are full of sin (show black doll). Someone must die for sin. That is why there was a sacrifice (show the red doll). Even though the Israelites sacrificed for sin, they had to do it over and over each time they sinned. They could not find a lasting sacrifice. This is one reason that Jesus came, to make a sacrifice for sin that would be once and for all. Once a person trusts the Lord Jesus Christ for forgiveness, he can be forgiven (show white doll).



Cookie Time (Fellowship Offering)

Bring cookies to class and have the students sit around the table; tell them to wait to eat until everyone has a cookie. Then talk briefly about the peace offering, which also is called the fellowship offering. The Israelites gave an offering to God and then ate a meal next to the tabernacle courtyard. This symbolized the people’s fellowship with God.

Coloring Pages

Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of this lesson. The students can color the pages in class or at home.

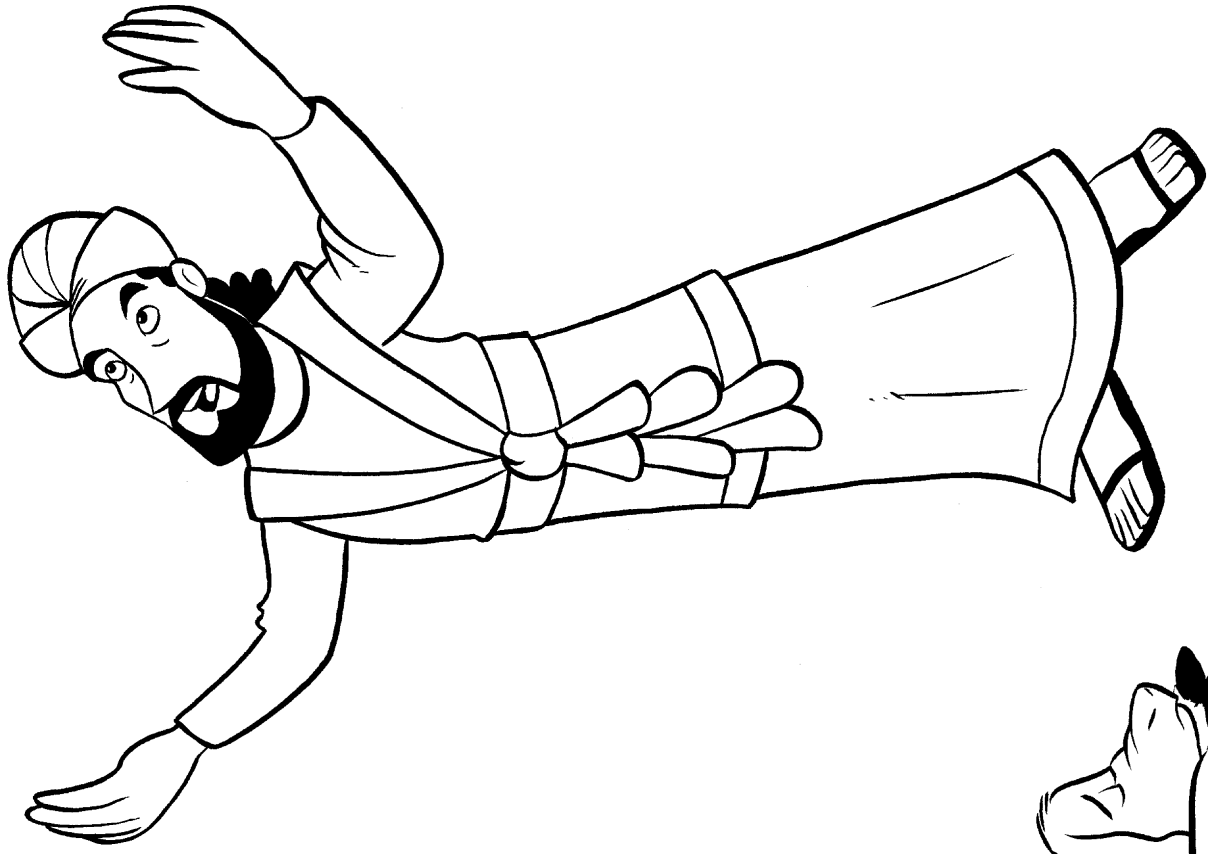


MEMORY VERSE

“Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy’” (Leviticus 19:2).

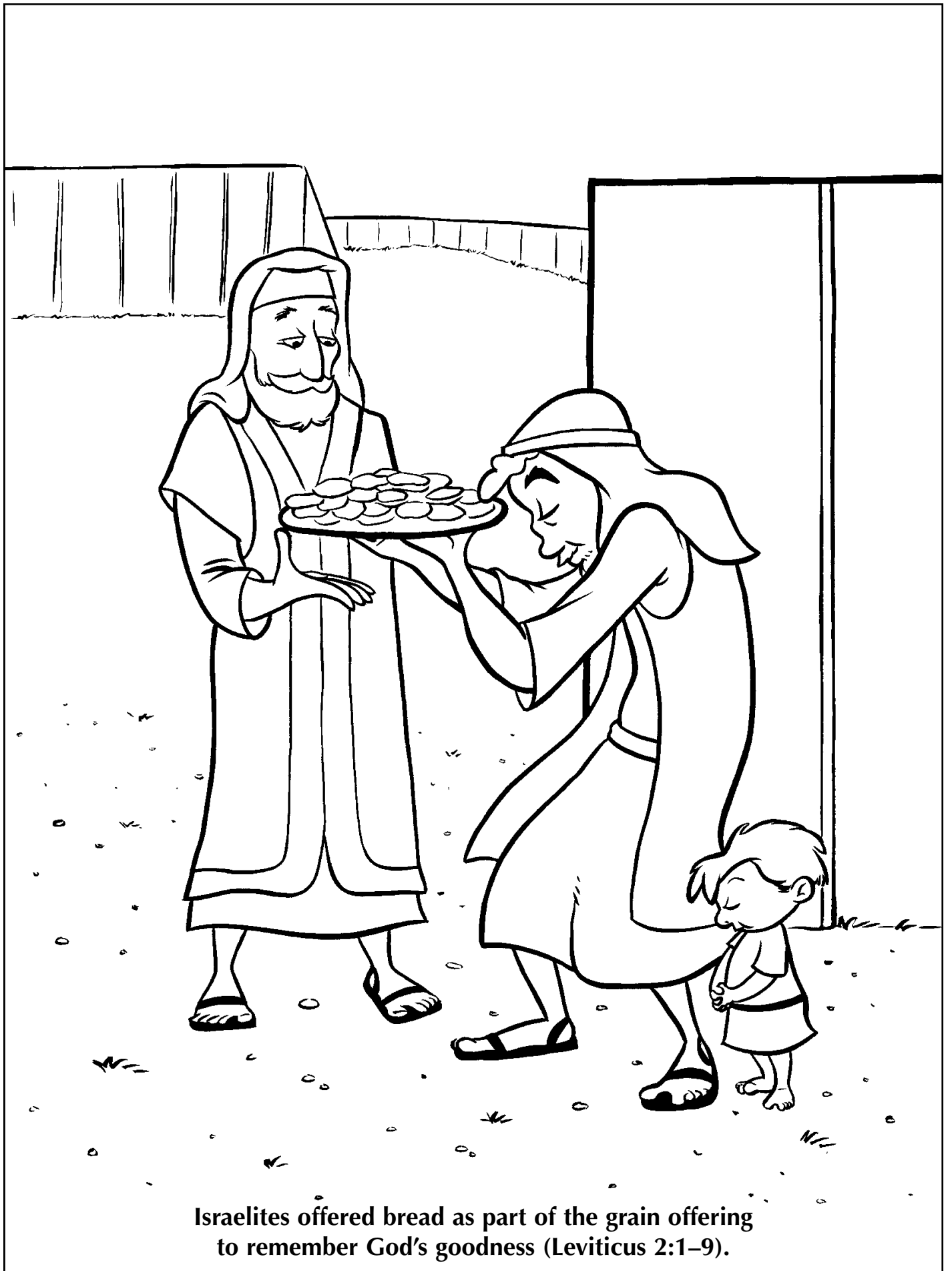
Paid in Full

Jesus Paid
the Sin Debt





The priest stood before the altar and made a burnt offering for sin (Leviticus 1:3–9).



Israelites offered bread as part of the grain offering to remember God's goodness (Leviticus 2:1-9).

