



## ויקרא *Vayikra* And He Called

[Leviticus 1.1](#)—5.26(6.7) / [Isaiah 43.21](#)—44.23 / [Luke 1](#)—3



ויקרא *Vayikra* The name for this book and this portion comes from the root קרא *qara* call/call out, when God calls to Moses from the Tent of Meeting. [1 Peter 2.9](#) says that believers are *called out* of darkness into God's light. Many regard Leviticus as a difficult, boring book, yet it is the first book many Jewish parents teach to their children from age five. It is the basis for how to approach God. The entire book takes place over the course of one month, Nisan, the first month of the religious year, one year after escaping from Egypt. Exodus ends with no one being able to enter the Tabernacle. Just as fire tape keeps onlookers from getting injured and only those who know how to proceed safely with the right training and equipment are allowed access, so the book of Leviticus tells us how to approach God, a Consuming Fire, [Hebrews 12.19](#).

**Be Holy** The book of Leviticus is surrounded by the sins of the Golden Calf in Exodus and failing to enter the Land in Numbers. This entire generation is doomed to die in the wilderness, yet this is the generation which receives instruction in holiness.

In [Leviticus 11.44-45](#) and [19.2](#), God says, “Be holy, for I am holy.” This hasn't changed. Peter quotes this verse in [1 Peter 1.16](#). Paul says in [Ephesians 1.4](#) that we were chosen before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless. And the Church, too, is to be holy and blameless, [Ephesians 5.27](#). “Be holy” is a consistent biblical command.

Many times we want to wait until we are cleaned up to approach God. But any covering we devise is insufficient. Adam and Eve tried to cover up with fig leaves. [Isaiah 30.1](#) says that using our own covering instead of God's is adding sin to sin. It is only God's covering which will work for Adam and Eve, ישראל *Yisra'el* Israel, and those who attach themselves to ישראל.

ויקרא The א *aleph* symbolically strength/leader/first at the end of ויקרא has been written small like this since the beginning תורה *Torah* Law/Instruction/5 Books of Moses. ויקרא is only written this way in this verse—nowhere else in Scripture. Moses is the first leader to carry the תורה. He must be humble, a trait required of *any* teacher who wishes to pass on God's Instruction.



### Sacrifice—Who Benefits?

[Leviticus 1.2](#) talks about how to קרב *qaray* come near/approach/enter into/draw near, the root of קרבן *korban* offering. קרבן sounds like carbon, which is what you get when you burn something. And קרוב *qarov*, as shown in the Babylon result, means relative. God doesn't need our sacrifices. But a sacrifice does benefit the one who gives it, helping to draw near. How

many times have you heard a comment like, “Do you know what I sacrificed for you/him/her/this company?” A person who says that has missed the point. *Sacrifice doesn't necessarily make the other party appreciate us. But by investing part of ourselves into that person or company, it makes us more appreciative of them!* For example, if nothing is ever expected of a child, such as common chores that contribute to the home, then the child never learns to invest in the family and never gets as close as he or she would if required to sacrifice. To that child, it's just about *me*, not *we*. In his book [Buried Treasure](#), author Daniel Lapin says that this is why children often seek counseling for their relationship with their parents, but parents rarely seek counseling for their relationship with their children. Because of the sacrifices parents make over the years, they develop sacrificial love for their children. In the same way, when we sacrifice to God, we develop sacrificial love for Him. When we קרב to God with קרבן, God doesn't benefit—we do—and we become like a קרוב. God doesn't need to get our gifts, [Psalm 50.7-15](#), but we need to give them.

A pastor's wife had a hard time at work with a supervisor who kept giving her grief. As a couple, they decided to act on [Proverbs 21.14](#) in faith and the wife gave her boss an expensive, anonymous gift. The whole work relationship changed immediately. The couple couldn't explain it other than obeying God's Word. But part of the reason is a change in the wife's heart. By her קרבן, she grew קרב to a person she disliked.



**כפר** [Leviticus 1.4](#) describes how the worshipper is to put his hands on the animal he is offering and the **קרבן** will be for him a **כפר** *kaphar* cover/atonement/reconciliation. In the Church, we are used to thinking that the purpose of the Levitical offerings was to take away sin. And yet we know that these sacrifices never could take away sin, and were an annual reminder of the problem of sin, as [Hebrews 10.3-4](#) says. But the purpose of the **קרבן** is to allow sinful people to approach a holy God. The **קרבן** is a **כפר**, insulation between us and the Consuming Fire. And although in the Church we are accustomed to thinking that the sacrifices are forever done away with because of the sacrifice of **ישוע** *Yeshua* Jesus/salvation, passages such as [Ezekiel 43](#) show us that sacrifices will be offered in the new Temple in which God will live forever.

Imagine a parent with a deadly disease in an isolation unit. The parent wants his or her child to **קרב**, but doing so would kill the child. By making the proper arrangements, however, the doctors are able to take precautions to allow the child to **קרב**. To us, the holiness of God is overwhelming and fatal. We need a **כפר** to approach God.

[“Put to death”](#) is found in over 100 verses. In the Old Covenant, sinners and sacrifices are put to death. In the New, **ישוע** and His followers are put to death. Believers die physically, not eternally. Because of the **קרבן** of **ישוע**, we eternally **קרב** to God. We are brought **עִגְיָס** *eggys* near by the blood of **ישוע**, [Ephesians 2.13](#). See the note in this link: the phrase to bring near was used by rabbis to mean becoming a Jew. That fits with Paul’s context for this verse—the Church is joined with **ישראל**. Because of the **כפר** of the **קרבן** of **ישוע**, we may **קרב** God.





**A Right Heart, True קרבן** The prophets make it clear that God wants a right heart. [Micah 6.6-8](#) tells us what God requires: not just sacrifices, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. This is the קרבן God requires. What a testimony if the world described the Church: “They practice justice and mercy without being proud!”

Another passage that tells what God really wants is [Isaiah 1.11-16](#). God says not to bring the blood of sacrifice. Why would God say this after תורה describes how to bring the sacrifices? Think of a woman in an abusive relationship. If the man verbally or physically abuses her, and then brings her flowers, does she appreciate them? Probably not! She might let the man know that the flowers are an insult until he gets his attitude right. In a sense, both God and the woman would be saying, “Don’t think you can treat me poorly, and then try to cover your hostility with gifts!” Or what if a wife caught her husband delivering flowers to a mistress? Could the husband “atone” by redirecting the flowers to his wife? Of course not! The wife would be furious, regardless of the offering, until her husband’s heart changed.



[Psalm 51.16-19](#) says the same thing: God delights in a broken and contrite heart first, and then sacrifices are welcome after that. This is the קרבן of God. People and priests, [Leviticus 4.1-3](#), and kings, [Leviticus 4.22-23](#), are all required to cover their sins with the appropriate sacrifice. Too often we see attempts, like Adam and Eve, to cover our sins with coverings of our own design. We are our own “spin doctors.” These attempts are unacceptable to God. [Leviticus 1.9](#) says that the burnt offering is a sweet savor unto יהוה YHVH The LORD. God is not delighting in the smell of a burning animal, but in the right heart attitude behind the קרבן (contrast with [Jeremiah 6.20](#) and [Malachi 1.10](#)). When King Saul sinned, God told him that obedience is better than sacrifice, and rebellion is like witchcraft, [1 Samuel 15.1-23](#).

We in the Church are under the false impression that Old Testament sacrifices functioned as forgiveness for sin. [Hebrews 9.13-14](#) makes it clear that as those sacrifices only made one outwardly clean. The blood of שׁוֹעֵל cleanses our consciences so that we may...obey. Too often we act as if the forgiveness is a free pass to do anything we want. But many passages, such as [Romans 6](#), [1 Corinthians 5](#), [Hebrews 6](#), [Hebrews 10](#), and [Revelation 10.6-8](#) argue against that licentious mindset.

There are many reasons to attend church besides worshipping God: fellowship, music, interesting sermons and discussions, social activities, and networking. A shrewd person could even attend church in order to camouflage his or her evil intentions.



*What is the attitude of your heart?*



### Indulgences Sold in Churches Today?

Johann Tetzel (1465-1519) was a Dominican priest infamous for selling indulgences. He rode into various towns with great pomp and sold these pieces of paper, which he promised could cancel various sins. At one point, he allegedly offered forgiveness for future sins. One story says that one of his customers robbed him outside town, stealing the money chest while proudly waving his indulgence (and also recovering his purchase price for the indulgence)! When Tetzel sold in the vicinity of Martin Luther, Luther strongly objected to the practice and a quote attributed to Tetzel, “As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs.” Luther insisted that forgiveness was God’s alone to grant and that forgiveness required a repentant heart. Luther’s posting of the [95 Theses](#), written in response to Tetzel, was the spark that started the Protestant Reformation.

Does the Church sell indulgences today?

There are those who say, based on [Romans 10.9-10](#), that all that is necessary for salvation is an expression of faith in **ישוע**. Then, since the **תורה** and “Old Testament” no longer apply to Christian life, what happens in the believer’s life after salvation is moot.

This belief contradicts **ישוע** in the Sermon on the Mount. In [Matthew 7.15-20](#), **ישוע** says that a good tree bears good fruit, a bad tree bears bad fruit, a good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. This is how we can recognize false prophets. Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Think about these very straightforward words of **ישוע**. Don’t settle for simplistic answers to life’s most important questions.





Levitical Sacrifices and their Fulfillment in ישוע

<p>קרבן <a href="#">Qorban</a> Offering</p>	<p>Covering of Sin, Leviticus</p>	<p>Perfect Atonement, ישוע</p>
<p>עלה <a href="#">Olah</a> Burnt Offering <a href="#">Leviticus 1.4</a></p>	<p>Daily animal sacrifice Completely consumed Total submission to God OK to offer a bird instead, prepared as if to look bigger, <a href="#">Leviticus 1.14-17</a></p>	<p>ישוע offers Himself completely, once for all, <a href="#">Hebrews 9.28</a>, we are crucified with Christ, <a href="#">Galatians 2.20</a>, we are to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, a reckless love for God, completely consumed, <a href="#">Romans 12.1</a>.</p>
<p>מנחה <a href="#">Minchah</a> Grain Offering <a href="#">Leviticus 2.1</a></p>	<p>No blood involved Shared by God and priest Dedication to God מצה <a href="#">matsah</a> unleavened bread, and oil <a href="#">Leviticus 2.4</a> Seasoned with salt of the covenant, <a href="#">Leviticus 2.13</a></p>	<p>ישוע is the Bread of Life, <a href="#">John 6.35</a>, no sin/(leaven) <a href="#">2 Corinthians 5.21</a>, anointed (oil): משיח <a href="#">mashach</a> anoint; משיח <a href="#">mashiyach</a> Messiah/Χριστός <a href="#">Christos</a>. As this anointed, unleavened Bread of Life, ישוע is broken (Passover) and shares Himself (Pentecost). Covenant of Salt: God's eternal bond with ישראל, <a href="#">Numbers 18.19</a> and <a href="#">2 Chronicles 13.5</a>, and which contradicts replacement theology.</p>
<p>שלמים <a href="#">Shelamiym</a> Peace Offering <a href="#">Leviticus 3.1</a></p>	<p>Shared between God, priest, and the one making the offering A "Thank You" gift to God</p>	<p>Through ישוע, we have peace with God, <a href="#">Romans 5.1</a>, which comes through the blood of ישוע, shed on the cross, <a href="#">Colossians 1.20</a>.</p>
<p>חטאת <a href="#">Khatat</a> Sin Offering <a href="#">Leviticus 4.3</a></p>	<p>Better: Purification—<a href="#">12.6</a> Mandatory offering to repair the covenant Gift says, "I'm sorry"</p>	<p>ישוע purifies us by His blood, <a href="#">1 Corinthians 15.3</a>, <a href="#">Revelation 1.5</a>. ישוע is faithful to forgive us when we confess, <a href="#">1 John 1.8-10</a>, <a href="#">Psalm 51</a>. Mandatory offering, <a href="#">John 3.18</a>.</p>
<p>אשם <a href="#">Asham</a> Guilt Offering <a href="#">Leviticus 5.15</a></p>	<p>Animal sacrifice for unintentional sin, plus a payment to cover damages</p>	<p>ישוע forgives those who crucified Him, <a href="#">Luke 23.34</a>, ensuring their sin is classified as unintentional. ישוע pays in full the debt that covers the damages of sin which we could never afford, <a href="#">John 19.30</a>, τελέω <a href="#">teleō</a>, see note on this verse in definitions for <a href="#">teleo</a>.</p>
<p>"Come near to God, and He will come near to you," <a href="#">James 4.8</a></p>		

**New Covenant in the Old** יהוה, the gracious and compassionate God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, says in [Isaiah 43.19-25](#) that He is the One who blots out transgressions and does not remember sin.

In the next chapter, [Isaiah 44](#), God describes all the trouble people go through to create and worship idols. Often we think of God's requirements as too difficult to obey. But our own inventions are more difficult.

There is only one way to find rest. If we stop trying to create gods in our own image, we can accept the plan of the One who sent His one and only Son to live, give, heal, teach, die, rise, save, judge, and rule forever.



Glossary, in order of appearance

ויקרא	<i>Vayikra</i>	And He Called, the title of this portion
קרא	<i>qara</i>	call/call out, the root for ויקרא
ישראל	<i>Yisrael</i>	Israel
א	<i>aleph</i>	first letter of the aleph-bet, strength, leader, first
תורה	<i>Torah</i>	Instruction/first five books of the Tenach/“Old Testament”
קרב	<i>qarav</i>	come near/approach/enter into/draw near
קרבן	<i>qorban</i>	offering
קרוב	<i>qarov</i>	relative
כפר	<i>kaphar</i>	cover/purge/make an atonement/make reconciliation
ἐγγύς	<i>eggys</i>	near
ישוע	<i>Yeshua</i>	Jesus/salvation
יהוה	<i>YHVH</i>	The LORD, the traditionally unpronounced name of God Jews say “Adonai” (Lord) or “Ha Shem” (the Name) when reading this name of God aloud
קרבן	<i>qorban</i>	offering
מנחה	<i>minchah</i>	grain offering
משח	<i>mashach</i>	anoint
משיח	<i>mashiyach</i>	Messiah
Χριστός	<i>Christos</i>	Anointed/Christ
שלמים	<i>Shelamiym</i>	peace offering
חטאת	<i>Khatat</i>	sin offering
אשם	<i>Asham</i>	guilt offering
τελέω	<i>teleō</i>	bring to a close/finish/end/perform/execute root of “It is finished!”