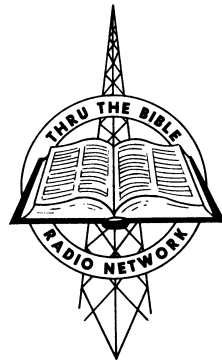


# The Loveliness of Jesus

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Although the book of Leviticus may seem to be a musty record of empty ritual and meaningless ceremonies, may I say to you that Christ is in Leviticus!

He is, I believe, on every page of Scripture. It is due to our blindness that we cannot always see Him there. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself said, “Moses wrote of me.” And then after His resurrection, there on the Emmaus road, He took His disciples through the prophecies. “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). Probably the oldest book in the Bible is the book of Job, out of which comes the heart-cry of humanity, “Oh, that I knew where I might find him.” And then the answer comes down over the centuries when Philip, the quiet man, goes to the comedian, Nathanael, and declares, “We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth” (John 1:45). Moses wrote of Him, and we find Him here in the book of Leviticus.

Actually, we have only four gospels in the New Testament, but we have five “gospels” in the book of Leviticus. There are five offerings in Leviticus, and each one of these offerings speaks of Christ and sets Him forth in a way found nowhere else in the Bible.

### **Sweet Savor Offerings**

These five offerings divide into what is known as sweet savor offerings and non-sweet (or bitter) offerings. The first three are sweet savor offerings, and they speak of the *person* of Christ—who He is. The last two (non-sweet) offerings speak of the *work* of Christ, what He did for us on the cross when He bore the sins of the world. The burnt offering, the meal offering, and the peace offering are all sweet savor offerings. Then the two non-sweet savor offerings are the trespass offering and the sin offering.

Now let me lift out the second of the sweet savor offerings, the *meal* offering. In the King James Version *meal* is translated *meat*, but when we read it carefully, we notice that there is no meat (as we understand the word) in it at all. If you have a Bible with good notes, you will see that *meat* offering is better translated *meal* offering. But even better than that, it is the *food* offering. And when you read the second chapter of Leviticus, it actually reads like a recipe of Betty Crocker. This is a recipe for bread, plain bread, unleavened bread—not very tasty, not like the hot biscuits you get down South. In fact, this kind of bread doesn’t appeal to the natural taste whatsoever, but it pictures Christ in a remarkable way.

The meal offering speaks of the perfect humanity of Jesus. I hope I make that clear. It does not refer to His being perfect as God, for this offering does not set forth His deity. It sets forth His humanity, His perfect humanity and the fact that He was perfectly human. The man Christ Jesus is here. We’re going to look at Him in probably a new way, not as Deity now (which we find in other offerings), but we see in this offering the thing that God had in mind for mankind.

God’s goal for man was fulfilled in Jesus. That is the reason He is called the “last Adam”—the first Adam failed so miserably. The Lord Jesus is also called the “second man,” not the last man. You see, God sent Him into the world to become a man, and He is the second one, because after Adam it says, “And Adam begot a son in his likeness.” Poor Adam, he was a sinner; and ever since, Adams have been sinners. All of us are Adams. No matter what your name is now, it was Adam; and somewhere along the line it was changed. They say that the McGees in Scotland took that name to disguise their identity. That’s the way most of us got our names, but it was Adam in the beginning. Although there have been many of them, there has been only the second man so far. But God has in mind a third and a fourth and a fifth—in fact there are going to be

millions of them, millions of the redeemed. Adam and his family failed so miserably. But Christ is the last Adam because, my beloved, after Christ, God has no other arrangement to improve the human family. That's His final effort. If you miss Christ, God has no emergency measure worked out for you. Christ is the last Adam, but He is the second man. God has in mind a great improvement for the human race. And this meal offering pictures the perfect man.

### **What is Man?**

You may think I'm a pessimist when I say that man is the most colossal failure in God's universe. But have you considered this? Man is farther off the track than any creature God has. Scripture says this: "They are all gone out of the way" (Romans 3:12), and that means they're a wreck. All, not just some, but all of mankind is a wreck. You see a train that has been wrecked, cars derailed, lying there twisted and shattered. You think, *How tragic! It was made to run on those tracks. It would have been at its destination in the morning, but it didn't get there.* That's man. God created man and put him on the track. But he's gone out of the way. Man is wrecked.

God has more to say about man: "All have sinned, and come short" (Romans 3:23). "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). All are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). And notice this, "And the way of peace have they not known" (Romans 3:17). That's man.

Reports are seldom interesting to me, but here is one that is. It is the Rockefeller Report, put out by one of the biggest funds in America today. No expense was spared; experts in every field were employed to produce it. These are some of its findings:

The world is living through a period of swift and far-reaching upheavals. Standards and institutions which have remained unchanged for centuries are breaking down. Millions who have hitherto passively endured their place in life are clamoring for a new and more worthy existence. Western Europe, the fountainhead of our civilization, has lost its position of prominence in world affairs. Across the great land mass of Eurasia and on the continent of Africa new nations are rising in the place of colonial empires. Mankind is yearning to realize its aspirations in peace.

Well, why doesn't man have peace if he wants it? Notice—"But it is faced by two somber threats: the Communist thrust to achieve world domination which seeks to exploit all dissatisfactions and to magnify all tensions." That's one. Notice the second: "And the new weapons of technology capable of obliterating civilization." The way of peace, this report says, man does not know.

Although down deep in his heart man would love to have peace, he cannot have peace. And God's Word has been saying that all along. With feverish energy man is trying to perfect fiendish instruments of frightful destruction today. Why? Because mankind is the most colossal failure in God's universe.

But don't be discouraged, don't be disappointed. Look at Jesus today and take hope. His person and life down here among men is a revelation of God's goal for humanity.

Let us look at Him now, not as God, but as man—the beauty of Jesus, His winsome personality, the kingliness of His manner, the glory of His manhood, the loveliness of Jesus. His coming was a doxology; His presence was a blessing; His departure was a benediction. See Him now as He is depicted in this meal offering.

There are two important aspects of this offering: ingredients that were included and ingredients that were excluded. There were certain ingredients in this offering that were demanded; they had to be there. There were other ingredients that were forbidden and could never be there.

## Ingredients Included

First of all, let's look at what was in the offering.

*And when any will offer a meal offering unto the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon.* (Leviticus 2:1)

### *Fine Flour*

The first ingredient is fine flour, and that illustrates the perfect humanity of Christ as probably nothing else does. The grain in Moses' day was ground by hand, and it was often very coarse and uneven if the grinder was careless or in a hurry. The flour for the meal offering must be a special grind. It had to be ground very fine. You see, sin has made all of the race lumpy. You and I are lumpy—one part of our personality is overdeveloped at the expense of other areas. Psychology has come up with an expression that is saying in technical terms what God is saying in simple terms to the entire human race. We hear today a great deal about a well-integrated personality. However, we never see those folk. That's a species that the human race does not produce. But here is One who is perfect in thought, perfect in word, and perfect in deed. The fact of the matter is, He is the only perfect man who has ever been on this earth. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only perfect man.

A lecturer was once talking about man's imperfection. He wanted to enforce his point, so he asked rhetorically for anybody in his audience who ever had seen a perfect man to lift his hand. No hand went up. Encouraged by this fact, he asked the question the second time, "Has anyone here ever seen a perfect man?"

Still no hand was raised. After he had asked it a third time, way back in the rear a little timid fellow lifted his hand. Surprised, the lecturer asked, "Have you seen a perfect man?" "I haven't exactly seen him, but I've certainly heard about him," the little fellow replied.

"Who in the world is he?"

"He's my wife's first husband."

No doubt he had heard a great deal about him! But if he had met him, I think he would have found out that he was not perfect.

The only perfect man who ever lived on this earth is the Lord Jesus Christ. And Jesus was normal, the only normal person who ever walked this earth. You see, today psychologists arrive at what they call a normality by drawing a line where the majority is, and they call that normal. But who told them it was normal? If you are different, you are considered abnormal. And that is the reason both Peter and Paul said to Christians, "You are a peculiar people"—different from those who are in the world. But folk today are afraid of being different. Especially is this true among the dissenters who pride themselves in being different. If you take a second look at them, you will see that they all dress alike, act alike, talk alike, think alike. Not one dares to be different from his crowd which he considers normal. But when our Lord was here upon this earth, they said to Him, "Thou hast a demon." Do you know why they said that? Because He was different. Even those who were His loved ones came to take Him away, saying, "He is beside himself." Why? Because He was not like they were. He was different, my beloved. Oh, the smoothness and the evenness of His person. I do not know why more people are not attracted to Him. He was even, He was temperate, He was normal.

Mentally, physically, emotionally, volitionally there was equipoise. None of us holds those in balance at all. We today have no smoothness—we're lumpy. One attribute is overbalanced and out of proportion to other attributes. Jesus was not a religious genius, although at twelve years of age, when He stood yonder in the temple, "hearing them and asking them questions," the religious rulers marveled at Him. Had He continued like that, I might agree with you that He was a religious genius, but He went back to Nazareth to the carpentry shop and became a carpenter. He was not out of proportion.

Notice what He was physically. He could go into the temple and drive out the money changers, and that crowd got out because they were afraid of Him. He was *man*, a physically powerful man. But this same one tenderly took the children into His arms. He was in balance.

See what He was mentally. They marveled at His teaching. My, how wonderful He was! As they marveled at His teachings, they said, "How is it that this man knows these things and He hasn't even been to our schools?" Yet He never appealed to His mind. You can't find anywhere in the gospels that the Lord Jesus said, "I've thought it through, and this is the best course of action." His mind was never the criterion. He did not appeal to His mentality as the basis for any judgment.

Emotionally He was in balance—and He had emotion. Yonder at the tomb of His friend Lazarus, He wept. But I tell you, when this fellow Simon Peter got emotional and said, "I will lay down my life for thy sake" (as we would say, "I want to put all on the altar for Jesus"), the Lord Jesus was not carried away by that kind of cheap emotion. He said, "Simon Peter, you're sincere but you don't know yourself. You'll deny Me this night." Jesus was never swayed or guided by His emotions. He could get angry, angry against evil. When the scribes and Pharisees came to Him, He called them hypocrites. But when a woman taken in adultery was brought to Him, He forgave her. He was firm but tender; He was strong but not brutal; He was gentle but not weak. He was benevolent, saying to His disciples, "You give them to eat," but He was economical also for He said, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

He was not motivated by His volitional life. Although it is said of Him that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, that His will was set, it was because He was responding to the Father's will. He said, "Not my will, but thine be done." His volitional nature was not the guideline for His action.

He was even; all of us are lumpy. Oh, the smoothness and evenness of His person.

With what humility He fell down before God yonder in the Garden of Gethsemane, but with what dignity He stood as they came to arrest Him. He was in perfect balance.

If you are at this time discouraged with yourself and you're disappointed in others, look at Jesus. He was a perfect person. There has been none like Him, *none* like Him.

## *Oil*

Then notice the second ingredient that went into the meal offering. It was oil—"he shall pour oil upon it" Oil is olive oil, and it speaks of the Holy Spirit. The flour was to be mixed with oil, and oil was to be poured upon it. The offering was drenched with oil. The prominence of the Holy Spirit in the human life of Jesus is very noticeable: He was born of the Spirit; baptized of the Spirit; led of the Spirit; He taught, performed miracles, and offered Himself in the power of the Spirit. If the Lord Jesus in His perfect humanity needed the Holy Spirit, surely you and I need Him to an even greater extent. May I say to you that the expression of the Christ-like life is never in the flesh; it is only as the Spirit of God moves through us by our yielding ourselves to Him.

## ***Frankincense***

Now notice the third ingredient—“he shall ... put frankincense thereon.” The frankincense was made from a secret formula using probably a resinous gum taken from a tree. It could exude its fragrance only under pressure and fire. This is a beautiful picture of our Lord as He manifests the fragrance of His life under the fires of tension, pressures, and persecution. He is never more lovely than yonder upon the cross. His life has given out a fragrance that has filled this world so that even the enemies of Jesus have to stand in the presence of the cross, and though they reject all the redemptive value that is there, they have to say, “He was lovely in death as He was lovely in life.” The fragrance of His person.

## ***Salt***

The final ingredient included in the meal offering was salt.

***And every oblation of thy meal offering shalt thou season with salt.*** (Leviticus 2:13)

Salt was required. Ordinarily salt is a preservative, but I think it has another value here. It is what Paul expressed to the Christians at Colosse, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt” (Colossians 4.6). Some folk have misread that and think that they’re to have a “salty” conversation. Unfortunately many Christians are very salty when you listen to them! But Paul had something entirely different in mind when he used the expression, “seasoned with salt.” My, a believer’s conversation ought to betray him. Just as Peter’s tongue betrayed him, our tongue ought to betray the fact that we are Christ’s.

A Chinese young lady, who had come to this country to study in one of our universities, was with a group of girls one Sunday afternoon as they were talking about this matter of salt—that we are said to be the salt of the earth. She contributed this, “One of the characteristics of salt is that it makes you thirsty.” Do you ever make anyone thirsty for God? You’re salt in the world. One of the loveliest compliments I have heard was about a woman who taught the mothers’ Bible class in a church I pastored. Long before I ever met her, I heard a lady say of her, “When I listen to her, it makes me want to know God.” You can’t say anything better about a teacher than that. Do you ever make anybody thirsty for God? What about the people with whom you work? Are they thirsty because you made them thirsty? You’re salt. The Lord Jesus was salt, and everywhere He went people got thirsty for God.

## **Excluded Ingredients**

The ingredients excluded from this offering are as prominent as the ingredients included.

## ***Leaven***

The first one is leaven.

***No meal offering, which ye shall bring unto the LORD, shall be made with leaven.***  
(Leviticus 2:11)

Leaven is to be excluded. Leaven throughout the Scriptures is used as a principle of evil and corruption. It is said of the Lord Jesus, relative to His humanity, that even in death His body did not see corruption. Certainly during His life there was no evil found within Him. He could say something that you and I could never say, “the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me” (John 14:30). Also He challenged His critics with this, “Which of you convicteth me of sin?” (John 8:46). You and I wouldn’t dare put out such a challenge because we are sinners. He was not. For over 1900 years they have looked at Him, and so far nobody has been able to point a finger and say that there was sin in His life. There was no evil in Him, no leaven. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. It is said of us, “We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). But, my friend, this is not said of Him. He is different in His humanity. There was no sin in Him.

### ***Honey***

The second ingredient to be left out of the meal offering is, to me, almost amusing:

***Nor any honey, in any offering of the LORD made by fire.*** (Leviticus 2:11)

This offering was not to be sweet—it was not cake. Honey was excluded. Why was honey explicitly forbidden? Because honey speaks of natural sweetness, the sweetness of the natural man. Do you ever meet people like that—affected, having a pious facade? They wear a makeup that Revlon has nothing to do with, but the devil made it. They are trying to improve the natural man. As Paul said, “They desire to make a fair show in the flesh.” You see them at church on Sunday, smiling with sweetness. They call everyone “dear” or “brother.” You would think that their halo had been shined with silver polish, it is so bright on Sunday! But Monday morning when they get on the telephone, you have never heard such vicious slander, such malicious gossip! Hell never spewed forth so much venom as comes from their lips. They are more dangerous than any killer with a gun. They are spiritual delinquents. Their halo is now gone, and the horns appear (the devil doesn’t have horns, but they do). A man said to me the other day, “McGee, it’s getting so you don’t know who to believe even in a church.” Oh, I want to say this to you: You can believe Jesus. He has no natural sweetness; there was no “put-on” with Him. He never deceived anyone. Some gullible people today believe every religious charlatan that comes along. My friend, let me say it with all the strength I can muster: Jesus is the only one you can believe, the *only* one. Paul said to believers, “Let love be without dissimulation,” which means let love be genuine. That’s what Paul is saying. Don’t back-slap if you don’t mean it. Don’t smile when it’s not genuine. Don’t pretend to be something that you’re not. Our Lord was genuine. How wonderful He was!

### ***Fire***

Lastly the meal offering was put on fire. Seven times we read here that it was burned or put on fire. The fire is symbolic of the suffering that Christ endured at the hands of men. It is not the suffering He endured for sin but, rather, because of sinful men. You see, the sufferings of the Lord Jesus can be divided into two categories: His suffering for our sin on the cross as our substitute, and also His suffering at the hands of men, which has nothing to do with our sins today. This meal offering being subjected to the fire speaks of that suffering which He endured

all His life on earth—hunger, thirst, weariness, loneliness, misunderstandings, revilings, hatred, persecution, humiliation, ridicule, scorn. He was sensitive as no other person ever has been sensitive, as they broke His heart long before He went to the cross. Then yonder on the cross He hung there for six hours. The first three hours He suffered at the hands of men. At high noon God put a mantle of darkness down on the cross, and in the last three hours He went through hell as He paid for the sins of the human family.

But the meal offering represented the suffering that Jesus endured at the hands of men.

***And he [son of Aaron] shall take of it his handful, of the flour of the meal offering, and the oil thereof, and all the frankincense which is upon the meal offering, and shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour, even the memorial of it, unto the LORD. (Leviticus 6:15)***

My friend, are you discouraged with yourself? Are you disappointed in others? Are you weary and heartbroken? Then turn your eyes upon Jesus. He is wonderful. You're not, and I'm not, but He is wonderful.

He is altogether lovely.