

Adult Bible Class

The Book of Leviticus - Lesson #2

The Five Offerings of Leviticus

In our last lesson we were introduced to the five offerings of the sacrificial system of ancient Israel explained in the first few chapters of the book of Leviticus. As we look at each offering (or sacrifice), we will see how 1) each one points to Jesus Christ and how 2) each one speaks to us as New Testament believers.

So far, we have studied the burnt offering from Leviticus chapter 1 (also called the “whole burnt offering”), which speaks to us of Christ’s total commitment to God’s purpose and will, and also speaks of the Christian’s total surrender to Jesus Christ. A burnt offering was totally consumed by fire on the altar, picturing total surrender and devotion.

Here are some important points regarding the burnt offering:

- 1) It is a “sweet savor to the Lord” or “pleasing aroma,” because it is given out of heart-felt devotion, and sin is not pictured in it;
- 2) It is offered to God in the place of the offerer;
- 3) The life of the animal is given (representing total surrender);
- 4) It is completely consumed, or burned up (also representing total surrender or devotion).

The animal for sacrifice was without blemish and it was given with a freewill. The animal was cut into four parts: the head represents the thoughts, the legs represent the walk, the inner parts (guts) represent the heart or the feelings, the fat represents health and strength. We could look at this in relation to Jesus Christ or to ourselves as New Testament believers. Look at the following Scripture:

Mark 12:29 (NKJV) Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments *is*: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. **30** And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This *is* the first commandment.

We also studied the second offering of Leviticus (from chapter 2) - *the grain offering*, or meal offering. This offering is either fine flour with olive oil and frankincense, or it is these ingredients baked or cooked somehow as bread *without yeast* (yeast representing sin).

A representative portion of the grain offering was given to God on the altar (the part mixed with frankincense) and was placed with the burnt offering on the altar. The rest of the grain offering was given to the priests for their food.

Regarding Jesus Christ, we see Jesus submitting His *will* (burnt offering), and *Himself* to God’s service to others (grain offering), eventually giving Himself on Calvary as payment for our sin debt.

For us as New Testament Christians, the Apostle John puts these two concepts together - that of loving devotion to God *and* to man - just as the burnt offering and the grain offering were put together:

1 John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? **21** And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

Review of the Grain Offering (Meal Offering)

Fine Flour

In order for grain to be made into bread it must be crushed. The body of Jesus Christ was bruised and crushed - to pay the debt for our sins:

Isaiah 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.

For us as New Testament Christians, giving ourselves to others in love and service will result in some bruising as well. The majority of trials that Christians endure involve *people* - people who disappoint us, people who let us down, people who offend us, people who fail God after we have invested much time and effort in their lives. If there's one thing we can count on, we are going to have trouble with people!

Sometimes we say, "I want to be more like Jesus." The more we become like Jesus, the more we are going to experience bruising, probably not in a physical sense, but we *will* have hurts and trials. But just as wheat is ground to become fine flour to make delicious and nutritious bread, if we can make it through the bruising with a good attitude, keeping our spirit intact, then we can also be a "sweet savor" to the Lord as a grain offering.

Olive Oil

Not only was flour an ingredient in the grain offering, but olive oil was added. The oil is produced by crushing the olive berries in an olive press. Without the crushing there will be no oil.

Oil in Scripture is a symbol of the Holy Spirit of God. When someone was anointed, oil was poured on him as a symbol of God's Spirit resting on him for God's purpose.

As we offer ourselves for service (the flour), we need the anointing of the Holy Ghost. It is God's Spirit that guides our service to others, giving us a right attitude and perspective, making our intent correct in His sight. Otherwise, service to others could be vain, done for self glory, or out of the will of God.

Frankincense

Another ingredient in the grain offering was frankincense. Frankincense is an aromatic resin obtained from a certain tree. It was burned as incense. The Hebrew word for it is *labonah*, which means "white," because the resin was white in color. Frankincense was very expensive and was found in parts of North Africa, Arabia, and India. Harvesting it was time consuming. The Egyptians used it, so the children of Israel who were delivered from Egypt were familiar with the substance.

Perhaps frankincense helped to give the burnt offering and the grain offering their “sweet savor” or “pleasing aroma” as the Lord received the smoke from these two offerings that were made together.

Incense in the Scriptures speaks of prayer unto God:

Psalms 141:2 (NKJV) Let my prayer be set before You as incense,
The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

Without prayer unto God, our service to others might fail or turn to bitterness as trials and problems come. Prayer will help to keep our attitude correct, and prayer will go up to God for His help and assistance in our daily lives.

Leaven or Yeast, Honey and Salt

Leviticus 2:11 (NLT) “Do not use yeast in preparing any of the grain offerings you present to the Lord, because no yeast or honey may be burned as a special gift presented to the Lord.

Honey is an ingredient that Leviticus states *must not* be added to the grain offering. This, along with yeast, were not to be added to the grain offering (although an Israelite woman might have added these ingredients to her normal bread that she made for her family). Honey is sweet, and the Bible warns us not to eat too much of it. Proverbs 25:27 associates honey with glory.

Proverbs 25:27 (NLT) It’s not good to eat too much honey, and it’s not good to seek honors for yourself.

Honey will burn when heat is applied, and the smell is not pleasant. We can see that honey (glory) has its place, but not in solemn offerings to the Lord. There is a time for glory, and there is a time for laying aside glory.

As we have said previously, yeast or leaven is a picture of sin in the Bible.

1 Corinthians 5:6 (NKJV) Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? **7** Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. **8** Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Salt was to be offered with the grain offering. Salt preserves food and brings out flavor. The Bible talks about a “covenant of salt,” which speaks to us of the enduring faithfulness of God’s promises. Since salt preserves, it is used to indicate enduring qualities - God’s promises are absolutely sure

The Peace Offering - Leviticus Chapter 3

The peace offering placed God as the giver of all good things to his creation. It recognized fellowship (or peace) between God, the priests, and the common man. This was possible because of the mercy and grace of God in providing sacrifice for



sin. These particular offerings are called “peace offerings” because through them God and his people, in a sense, feasted together as friends. The peace offering was a symbol of friendship and fellowship between God and man and a confirmation of the covenant of peace.

The peace offering also represented God’s provision and the prosperity that He gives, as well as the happiness that He brings in all that He does. Peace offerings could be made looking ahead to God’s expected care, keeping, or provision. Peace offerings could also be made looking back to what God had already done, giving thanks.

Lev. 3:1 (NKJV) ‘When his offering *is* a sacrifice of a peace offering, if he offers *it* of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord.

The peace offering was an animal offering like the burnt offering. It could be of the herd (cattle) or of the flock (sheep or goats). *Unlike* the burnt offering, the peace offering could be male or female - but it still had to be without defect, and it was still a free-will offering. Also unlike the burnt offering, a bird like the turtledove or pigeon could not be offered.

2 And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron’s sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood all around on the altar. **3** Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire to the Lord. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails... **5** and Aaron’s sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which *is* on the wood that *is* on the fire, as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.

6 ‘If his offering as a sacrifice of a peace offering to the Lord *is* of the flock, *whether* male or female, he shall offer it without blemish...

17 ‘*This shall be* a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall eat neither fat nor blood.”

The fat was burned on the altar, on top of the burnt offering, just as the grain offering was placed on the burnt offering. The burnt offering is the foundation (giving one's will over to God in total commitment and surrender) upon which the other offerings are situated. These offerings were all burned on one fire.

The fat was God's part of the sacrifice, and the blood was for atonement. Therefore, the Israelite was not to eat fat or blood.

Leviticus 7 gives more information on the peace offering:

Further Instructions for the Peace Offering

Leviticus 7:11 (NLT) "These are the instructions regarding the different kinds of peace offerings that may be presented to the Lord. **12** If you present your peace offering as an expression of thanksgiving, the usual animal sacrifice must be accompanied by various kinds of bread made without yeast—thin cakes mixed with olive oil, wafers spread with oil, and cakes made of choice flour mixed with olive oil. **13** This peace offering of thanksgiving must also be accompanied by loaves of bread made with yeast. **14** One of each kind of bread must be presented as a gift to the Lord. It will then belong to the priest who splatters the blood of the peace offering against the altar. **15** The meat of the peace offering of thanksgiving must be eaten on the same day it is offered. None of it may be saved for the next morning.

It is curious that leavened bread was to be eaten with the peace offering meal made as a thanksgiving. However, leavened bread was never offered on the altar to God as God's portion because leaven represents sin.

16 "If you bring an offering to fulfill a vow or as a voluntary offering, the meat must be eaten on the same day the sacrifice is offered, but whatever is left over may be eaten on the second day. **17** Any meat left over until the third day must be completely burned up. **18** If any of the meat from the peace offering is eaten on the third day, the person who presented it will not be accepted by the Lord. You will receive no credit for offering it. By then the meat will be contaminated; if you eat it, you will be punished for your sin.

19 "Meat that touches anything ceremonially unclean may not be eaten; it must be completely burned up. The rest of the meat may be eaten, but only by people who are ceremonially clean..."

The Forbidden Blood and Fat

22 Then the Lord said to Moses, **23** "Give the following instructions to the people of Israel. You must never eat fat, whether from cattle, sheep, or goats. **24** The fat of an animal found dead or torn to pieces by wild animals must never be eaten, though it may be used for any other purpose. **25** Anyone who eats fat from an animal presented as a special gift to the Lord will be cut off from the community. **26** No matter where you live, you must never consume the blood of any bird or animal. **27** Anyone who consumes blood will be cut off from the community."

God reiterates that the eating of fat or blood is forbidden.

A Portion for the Priests

28 Then the Lord said to Moses, **29** "Give the following instructions to the people of Israel. When you present a peace offering to the Lord, bring part of it as a gift to the Lord. **30** Present it to the Lord with your own hands as a special gift to the Lord. Bring the fat of the animal, together with the breast, and lift up the breast as a special offering to the Lord. **31** Then the priest will burn the fat on the altar, but the breast will belong to Aaron and his descendants. **32** Give the right thigh of your peace offering to the priest as a gift. **33** The right thigh must always be given to the priest who offers the blood and the fat of the peace offering. **34** For I have reserved the breast of the special offering and the right thigh of the sacred offering for the priests. It is the permanent right of Aaron and his descendants to share in the peace offerings brought by the people of Israel. **35** This is their rightful share. The special gifts presented to the Lord have been reserved for Aaron and his descendants from the time they were set apart to serve the Lord as priests. **36** On the day they were anointed, the Lord commanded the Israelites to give these portions to the priests as their permanent share from generation to generation."

The offerer was to lift up or wave the parts of the peace offering that were given to the priests as their rightful portion. The symbolism of the breast and the right shoulder is great. The priests, as ministers of God, were to have a heart for God and the people, and they were to “shoulder” the responsibilities of serving the people and mediating between God and man.

The Order of the Peace Offering

Here is the order of what took place when a peace offering was made:

1. The offerer brought his peace offering to the tabernacle entrance.
2. He laid his hand on its head, then he slew the animal
3. The priest sprinkled the blood on the altar and around it.
4. The animal was then cut up.
 - a. God’s portion (the fat) was burned on the altar (placed on the already burning burnt offering and grain offering) and the smoke rose to heaven to God as a sweet savor.
 - b. The offerer waved the breast before the Lord, then he gave the priest the breast (brisket) and the right thigh (shoulder) for him and his family to eat.
 - c. The offerer kept the rest of the animal to eat with his family and friends. It could be eaten anywhere, but it must not come in contact with anything unclean.

The peace offering is a shared meal of God, the priest and his family, and the offerer and his family and friends.

As we study the different offerings, we look for Jesus Christ in the offerings and also how the offering relates to our Christian walk. Regarding the peace offering, Jesus can be seen as 1) the offering (His life given to bring peace and fellowship between God and man), 2) the priest (the man Christ Jesus serving as Mediator between God and man), and 3) the offerer (giving Himself). Jesus is also 4) the God who receives the offering as the smoke billows towards the heavens.

Love and Sacrifice

The altar itself is a place of sacrifice - the place where things get done. Without an altar there is no devotion to God or service to God. Without an altar there is no fellowship of God, Christ, and mankind. There can be no love and fellowship without sacrifice. Most of us realize that we usually make sacrifices in life for those we love - not for those to which we have no connection.

1 John 3:16 (NKJV) By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

When we read that Jesus laid down His life for us, we think of Calvary. However, in a sense, Jesus also laid down His life before Calvary as he ministered to people on a daily basis.

Likewise, we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. We can't die for their sins, but we can live to serve.

1 John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

The Peace Offering / New Testament Christians

The offerer of the peace offering is allowed to share in the fellowship meal. *"All who are clean may eat of it."* (Lev. 7:19b NKJV). The Apostle John gives insight on true fellowship with God and man through a clean heart (by the power of the Spirit of God):

1 John 3:18 (NLT) Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. **19** Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God. **20** Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything.

21 Dear friends, if we don't feel guilty, we can come to God with bold confidence. **22** And we will receive from him whatever we ask because we obey him and do the things that please him.

23 And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us. **24** Those who obey God's commandments remain in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us.

The peace offering is for those who are clean to partake in a fellowship meal with God and the priests. Guilt feelings come when we do not do right. If we have guilt, we can go to God in repentance. God is greater than our sin and our guilt, and He can wash and cleanse us. To have true fellowship and communion with God and man requires a clean heart.

God Asks for Our Best

The concept of bringing these first three offerings to God at the altar (the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the peace offering) is one of bringing our best to God. Animals that were brought were "without blemish." God wants our best! Remember, when the offerer put his hand on the animal's head, he was making the animal to be a substitute for himself. The offerer was therefore bringing to God a clean life. Look at the following Scripture that indicates the opposite:

Malachi 1:6 (NLT) The Lord...says to the priests...

7 "You have shown contempt by offering defiled sacrifices on my altar...

"You defile them by saying the altar of the Lord deserves no respect. **8** When you give blind animals as sacrifices, isn't that wrong? And isn't it wrong to offer animals that are crippled and diseased? Try giving gifts like that to your governor, and see how pleased he is!" says the Lord...

9 "Go ahead, beg God to be merciful to you! But when you bring that kind of offering, why should he show you any favor at all?" asks the Lord...

10 "How I wish one of you would shut the Temple doors so that these worthless sacrifices could not be offered! I am not pleased with you," says the Lord..."and I will not accept your offerings..."

12 "But you dishonor my name with your actions... **13** You say, 'It's too hard to serve the Lord,' and you turn up your noses at my commands," says the Lord..."Think of it! Animals that are stolen and crippled and sick are being presented as offerings! Should I accept from you such offerings as these?" asks the Lord.

14 "Cursed is the cheat who promises to give a fine ram from his flock but then sacrifices a defective one to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the Lord...

Two Extremes - Watch Out!

Because of Jesus' great sacrifice, God accepts us as we obey His plan of salvation. In return, God expects us to give our very best to Him and to His people.

People can fall into two traps - two extremes. First, because we are God's children and we know He expects us to give our best, we can feel guilty - that we never quite measure up. But as we strive to please God and do His will, we must also rely on God's grace to take care of our imperfections and our spiritual immaturity as we grow in Him.

On the other hand, it is possible to accept sins in our lives as "the way it is," and then confound what God has done for us. Instead of overcoming, striving, and doing battle, we give in to a half-hearted, sin crusted life. It is lame sacrifices all over the place! Jesus said:

Matthew 5:29 (NKJV) If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. **30** And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Obviously, Jesus is very serious about overcoming sin. Though Jesus does not mean for us to literally cut off body parts, yet he uses this illustration to show us that we *must* remove sin from our lives.

The Priest's Children

A part of the peace offering was given to the priest (who helped with the offering) and his children or family. The New Testament book of Hebrews vividly tells us that Jesus Christ is our High Priest. Scripture also says that we are priests unto God, since we are the children of the High Priest, Jesus:

Hebrews 4:14 (NKJV) Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. **15** For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin.

Rev. 1:5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, **6** and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The offerer could not fellowship with God without fellowshiping with the priest and his children (Christ and His church). Christ and His church go together. In the end times, not only will Jesus Christ rule and reign, the church will rule and reign with Him!

Love God, Love Man, Have Peace

The first three offerings of Leviticus therefore are linked together, just as the grain offering and the peace offering were laid on top of the burnt offering on the altar. Putting together the burnt offering and the grain offering, we can look at the following Scripture:

Matthew 22:36 (NKJV) "Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?"

37 Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' **38** This is *the* first and great commandment. **39** And *the* second *is* like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' **40** On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Add to this the peace offering. Loving God and loving your neighbor leads to the peaceable fruit of righteousness:

Acts 2:41 (NKJV) Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*. **42** And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers...

46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Peace comes when the burnt offering and the meal offering are in their place on the altar. Peace comes when the peace offering is distributed to God, the priest, and the offerer and they have fellowship together.

Jesus, Our Peace

The New Testament tells us that Jesus Christ is our peace. He brought the Gentiles into His family so that both Jew and Gentile are one in Him.

Ephesians 3:14 (NLT) For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. **15** He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. **16** Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death. **17** He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. **18** Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

A Temple for the Lord

19 So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. **20** Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. **21** We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. **22** Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

A Peace Offering in Scripture

A great peace offering is recorded in Scripture when King Solomon dedicated the great Temple in Jerusalem:

1 Kings 8:62 (NKJV) Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the Lord.
63 And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the Lord, twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord. **64** On the same day the king consecrated the middle of the court that was in front of the house of the Lord; for there he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar that was before the Lord was too small to receive the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.

Since a part of the peace offering is to have a fellowship meal, there must have been great rejoicing in Jerusalem that day with feasting and thankfulness to God. The Temple had been completed, and the nation of Israel was at its zenith. What a day of peace!