

Anticipating the End of the Story

What’s an ending without the beginning?

The end of a story cannot be fully appreciated without the buildup and unfolding of the plot which precedes it.

The unfolding subplot of sacrifices in the Bible

The Passover Lamb – Redemption from slavery, escape from death, and the Promised Land

The Burnt Offering – Continual forgiveness is available for the believer through the shedding of blood.

The Grain Offering – We respond with joyful gratitude and commitment.

...more to come next week!

God’s Worship is in Response to What He’s Done

What is this offering, and how is it different than the burnt offering?

A burnt offering (Hebrew = “olah”) is an offering that literally “goes up” to God.

This grain offering (Hebrew = “minha”) is an offering that is a tribute.

Here, we take a different interpretation than many rabbis who say the offering was a poor man’s burnt offering. Their argument is that because it followed the burnt offering, it is in the same category.

1. But the grain offering has no shedding of blood, therefore it cannot be for atonement.
2. But the burnt offering already had provision for the poor in the offering of birds.
3. But the grain offering has no “life for life” symbolism and no substitutionary aspect.

Visual depictions of the four grain offerings

Fine flour, baked loaves, made on the griddle, fried in oil

A tribute to the best king in the world

The word takes its meaning from a king and his vassal. The king provides everything for the vassal state that it needs to survive, the vassal in turn offers his loyalty and faithfulness.

Salt and Remembrance

Memorial portion – A small part burned on the altar to God in remembrance of what he has done.

Salt – A preservative; this symbolized the preservation of the covenant.

God’s Worship is For Everybody

An inclusive sacrifice

This sacrifice differs in who offers it. Instead of being a “man” it is a “soul.” (Hebrew = Nephesh, ≠ Adam)

Everyone had some form of bread.

Why it matters

All the great ones to little ones should learn to offer to the Lord. When you give, do your children get involved? Do you feel like you don’t have enough to give for it to count?

God’s Worship Is to be Offered with Holiness

Symbolism within the sacrifice

Oil – The Bible uses this as a sign of both consecration to God and also a sign of joy.

Frankincense – An aromatic that would create a pleasing aroma to God. It expresses intentionality that this is for God. A small amount is edible even today.

No leaven or honey – Leaven is consistently a sign of corruption throughout the Bible; probably, honey also would have also quickly fermented, causing corruption. This is a sign of the moral purity with which we should offer ourselves to God.

For the Christian

Romans 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Questions for Study and Reflection

1. What are the differences between the burnt offerings and grain offerings?
2. What is the significance of this offering being a tribute of remembrance? As Christians, what Covenant do we remember?
3. How is the grain offering inclusive of everybody, and what does that show you about God’s heart?
4. Are you pursuing holiness to God? How are you removing leaven and corruption from your life?