



Sermon Summary

November 26, 2023

The First Thanksgiving Dinner Leviticus 7:11-21 (Lev. 3:1-17)

When was the first Thanksgiving in the US? Most would say in 1621 at Plymouth Plantation in Massachusetts where the Pilgrims and Native Americans held a harvest festival. However, we Virginians know the real first Thanksgiving was on December 4, 1619, when a group of 38 English colonist led by Captain John Woodlief came ashore at Berkley, VA and knelt in prayer to thank God for a safe arrival from England. Even President Kennedy (from Massachusetts) acknowledged Virginia's claim in 1962. Yet we find an earlier one in ancient Israel!

The Peace Offering

In summary, in the OT there were offerings to atone for sin (Sin and Guilt), to make commitment to God (The Burnt, Grain, and Drink) and to commune with God (Fellowship [*peace*]). When offerings were presented together, they were done in that order – Cleansing, Commitment, Communion

The Offering Elements – (1) An animal: Cow, Sheep, or Goat (2) The Grain Offering: unleavened cakes mixed with olive oil, unleavened wafers coated with oil, and well-kneaded cakes of fine flour mixed with oil. (3) Cakes of leavened bread.

The Offering's Purpose – The word translated “fellowship” includes the ideas of health, wholeness, welfare, and peace. The same idea as the Jewish greeting, “Shalom!” The offering represents peace with God. The worshipper offered the sacrifice in (1) Thanksgiving, (2) Fulfilling a Vow (see Hannah's offering in 1 Sam 1:24,25) or (3) As a freewill offering.

The Offering's Instructions – The worshipper offered the Grain Offering. Then the worshipper offered the animal by laying his hands on the animal. The priest slaughtered the animal splattering the blood on the sides of the altar. Then the priest burned the fat and the kidneys on the altar. The priest received the right breast and right thigh for his portion. Then the worshipper was given the rest of the meat to eat with his family, although he was forbidden from eating the blood or fat. More importantly, the worshipper couldn't eat it if he was unclean.

Principles for Christians

In General: On the cross Jesus purchased reconciliation (2 Cor 5:16-21) and peace with God (Col 1:20) for all who trust in Him. We don't have to offer sacrifices to atone for our sins. However, we do give an offering of commitment – ourselves (Rom 12:1,2). We commune with God and others at the Lord's Supper, and we offer sacrifices of thanksgiving (Ps 116:17) and sacrifices of praise (Heb 13:15) from **PURE** hearts that are grateful for His mercies.

For Thankfulness: If you are thankful, do something for God. The worshipper would have gone to great expense and time to offer this sacrifice. Why should our “thank you” only be in words? Do something - Give, serve, or share. If you are thankful share with others. This offering was a celebration with others. We can't keep what God has done for us to ourselves. He's blessed us with salvation – share the news with others. He has blessed us with gifts – share them with others.