

THE LEVITICAL OFFERINGS

5. THE PEACE OFFERING (Leviticus 3)

The Peace Offering was preeminently connected with praise, thanksgiving and fellowship. Its similarities to and in its differences from the Burnt Offering are important. As we proceed we will see that while the atoning work of our great Sacrifice for us before God is still in view, the main emphasis is on what we receive from Him, with the sense of happy thanksgiving His bestowment produces in us.

1. The Name

Leviticus 3:1: *If his oblation be a sacrifice of peace offering.*

There are three terms to note here:

- **Oblation**—Heb. *qorban*—comes from a verb that means to approach or draw near. The only way to draw near to God is by the work of the altar.
- **Sacrifice**—Heb. *zebach*—from the verb to slaughter; it is the same root word as *altar* and emphasizes the shedding of the blood of the sacrificial victim. At the same time *zebach* carries a heavy emphasis on such ideas as praise, thanksgiving and fellowship:

Psalms 27:6: *Therefore will I sacrifice in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy;*

Psalms 54:6: *I will freely sacrifice unto thee; I will praise thy name, O Lord;*

Psalms 116:16: *I will offer unto thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving;*

Jonah 2:7: *I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving.*

- **Peace Offering**—Heb. *shelamim* from the verb *shalam*, “to be sound, whole entire,” always, with the exception of Amos 5:22, in the plural. It comes from the same word as *shalom*, and denotes wholeness or completeness. It is an interesting word:
 - a. It is closely related to words such as *peace*, *friend*;
 - b. One form of the verb (the intensive) means *to restore* (something stolen), Psalms 37:21; *to pay* (vows, Psalms 50:14; sacrifices, Hosea 14:3); *to repay*, *recompense* (one according to his works, Psalms 62:13, Jeremiah 50:29).
 - c. Another form of the verb (the one that expresses causation) is used to mean *to make peace* with someone, Joshua 10:1, 4; or *to make someone a friend*, Proverbs 16:7: *when a man’s ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.*

All this gives us an idea of the import of the name: it is a blood sacrifice that expressed the wholeness of the relationship of the offerer to the Lord on the basis of an acceptable blood sacrifice. It denotes the peace and safety the Lord bestowed on him and celebrates the consequent fellowship they enjoyed.

2. The Different Kinds of Peace Offering

- Thank Offerings: Leviticus 7:12
- Votive Offerings: Leviticus 7:16
- Voluntary Offerings: Leviticus 7:16

3. The Elements in the Peace Offering

• THE ANIMALS

Victims might be of the herd (Leviticus 3:1) or of the flock (Leviticus 3:6, 7, 12).

• THE ACCOMPANYING OFFERINGS

A Meal Offering: Leviticus 7:12

A Heave Offering: Leviticus 7:14.

A Wave Offering: Leviticus 7:30

The Wave and Heave Offerings were not separate sacrifices but the lifting up, or presentation, of the Peace and Meal Offerings before the Lord.

4. The Ritual

• THE OFFERER'S WORK

- a. Select the animal, Leviticus 3:1, 6
- b. Lay his hand on its head, Leviticus 3:2, 8, 13
- c. Kill the animal at the door of the tabernacle, Leviticus 3:2, 8, 13
- d. Dissect the body of the animal and bring the fat to be burned and the breast to be waved before the Lord: Leviticus 7:29, 30

• THE PRIESTS' WORK

- a. They *sprinkled* = **SCATTERED** the blood: Leviticus 3:2
- b. They burned the fat & inward parts of the victim on the altar, specifically, on the Burnt Offering: Leviticus 3:3-5; 7:31

5. The Unique Features of the Peace Offering

- **A portion of the Peace Offering was allotted to God, to the priests and to the offerer**—they all “ate” of it:
 - a. **THE LORD'S PORTION:** The fat, the inward parts, Leviticus 3:9-11, 16-17; 7:31. Note the expression, *The food of the offering*, literally, *the bread of the fire offering*, verse 11.
 - b. **THE OFFICIATING PRIEST'S PORTION:** **the heave offering**, i.e, one of the leavened cakes, Leviticus 7:14, and the right shoulder, Leviticus 7:32, 33
 - c. **THE HIGH PRIEST'S FAMILY'S PORTION:** **the wave offering**, that is the breast, Leviticus 7:30-31, 34.
 - d. **THE OFFERER'S PORTION:** the remaining flesh, which was the most of the animal, Leviticus 7:15.

- **The victims may be male or female:**
The reason: this offering dwells more on the fruit of the atoning sacrifice, its reception and enjoyment by all believers.
- **In the special Meal Offering leaven was included:**
Again it is the experience of the offerer that is in view, not the character of the sacrifice **and every offerer had corruption remaining in him.**

6. The Immediate Significance of the Peace Offering

As noted, this offering enabled the worshipper to enjoy communion with God on the basis of the peace that had been established on the basis of the blood of atonement.

This was denoted in a number of ways:

- **The Peace Offering was offered on the Burnt Offering.** The worshipper was thus made to know that the sole ground of peace with God was the Burnt Offering, which ascended to God as a savour of rest. Thus he learned that atonement was the ground of reconciliation, and satisfaction the ground of acceptance.
- **The Peace Offering was a communal meal by which God, the priest and the offerer were each satisfied.** This is true communion, God, man and the mediator all satisfied with the same sacrifice.
- **The Peace Offering was afforded a way for the devout worshipper to give thanks,** pay his vows and generally live in the joy of his standing with God.

7. The Fulfilment of the Peace Offering in Christ

- **The Peace Offering gives a very clear type of Christ, who *is our peace*, who *made peace by the blood of his cross*, who *reconciled both (Jew and Gentile believers) in one body*, and who *came and preached peace to them that were nigh (Jews) and to them who were afar off (Gentiles)*.**
- **Christ is the great Reconciler**, removing the enmity between the sinner and God. This He did by the shedding of His blood in sacrifice.
- **The strong emphasis on the inward parts and the fat** as the part of the Peace Offering that became God's portion, the food of the offering, **aptly represents the total sinlessness of Christ's human nature—*holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners* (Hebrews 7:26).** He alone could say, *I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea thy law is within my heart* (Psalm 40:8; cf. Hebrews 10:7).

Contrast the significance of the inclusion of *leaven* in the Peace Offering and see Romans 7:18.

- **The use of male and female animals reminds us that this offering represents the results of Christ's atonement more than the act.**
When the latter is mostly in view, only a male of the first year is acceptable. When the former is most prominent, a male or female is acceptable. Christ's atonement benefits male and female, people of every kind.

8. The Message of the Peace Offering for Us

- Believers in Christ have God's peace in the fullest sense of the term. Remember that the name of the Peace Offering is almost entirely in the plural. The plural in Hebrew may denote majesty, fulness, or completeness and this accords with the New Testament's statements.
 - a. Jesus spoke of *the things that belong unto thy peace*. Everything necessary to our peace is in Him.
 - b. The New Testament speaks of different kinds of peace (2 Thessalonians 3:16):
 - Peace with God:** Romans 5:1. This is reconciliation
 - The peace of God:** Philippians 4:7. This is the sense of calm and wellbeing that the Lord gives to His reconciled people. See John 14:27; 16:33.
 - Peace of conscience:** Hebrews 9:14; 10:22.
- The Peace Offering gives many clear lessons about living in true peace:
 - a. It is to be enjoyed only in communion with the Lord.
 - b. That communion is based on an appropriation by faith of the cross work of Christ—note the hand on the head of the sacrifice.
 - c. Communion with God is really feasting on Christ.
 - d. It is also a genuine giving of thanks and praise for all the blessings of divine grace in Him.
 - e. It will lead to true devotion—note the votive offering.
 - f. It is always to be up to date—note the strict time limits on the eating of the offering.
 - g. It is open only to those who are *clean*. In OT terms, that means *ceremonially* clean. In NT terms it means moral and spiritual purity—that is, *it typifies truly saved people*: 1 Corinthians 6:11, though not yet perfect (cf. *leaven*).
 - Eating at the table of the Lord while unclean (unsaved) exposes the perpetrator to great penalty.
 - While the feast of fellowship around the Peace Offering may remind us of participating at the Lord's Table, strictly speaking this is not its meaning. Rather, it refers to people who claim the benefits of the gospel without saving faith in Christ.
 - h. It is to be shared with family and friends. Note that the priest (Christ) shares his portion with his family and then think of such texts as Isaiah 53:11 and Revelation 3:21.