

CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE- PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian
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DHW BIBLE CLASS LESSON 2 LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 2 & 3

INTRODUCTION

These two chapters are devoted to the discussion of the *sweet aroma offerings unto the LORD*. One question that is often asked is: "What possible interest could anyone have in the details of these various ritual offerings performed long ago by the Israelites?"

These sacrifices were basic to Israel's worship. The instructions regarding the means and manner in which to make these sacrifices were given by the One True and Living God. They help us to understand and appreciate the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ; enlighten us on the holiness of God; and instruct us on the right attitude of approaching God.

The first *sweet aroma sacrifice* was the burnt offering given in chapter 1. The next two *sweet aroma sacrifices* were (1) the "meat offering" in chapter 2; and (2) the "peace offering" in chapter 3.

The meat offering was the one offering that did not consist of meat. The meaning of a word changes in the course of time. The word "meat" used to be a common name for food. The meat offering was a meal offering, an offering of grain or cereals made of fine flour. The word "meat" simply means a present.

OUTLINE

- A. The Grain Offering (2:1-17).
1. If the grain offering was of flour (vv.1-3).
 - a. Must be of fine flour (v.1a).
 - b. Mixed with oil and frankincense (v.1b).
 - c. Brought to the priests (v.2a).
 - d. The priests would take a handful of the mixed flour (v.2b).
 - e. The priests would burn it on the altar (v.2c).
 - f. It was a sweet savour unto the LORD (v.2d).
 - g. The remainder of the mixed flour was left for the priests (v.3).
 2. If the grain offering was cooked (vv.4-10).
 - a. Baked in an oven (v.4).
 - Must be made of unleavened fine flour.
 - Mixed with oil.
 - b. Fried on a flat pan (vv.5,6).
 - Must be unleavened fine flour.
 - Mixed with oil.
 - Divided into pieces.
 - Oil poured on them.
 - c. Fried in a pan (v.7).
 - Made of fine flour.
 - Mixed with oil.
 - d. Brought to the priests at the altar (vv.8-10).

- The priests would burn part of the offerings.
 - It was a sweet savour unto the LORD.
 - The remainder was given to the priests.
3. If the grain offering was of the firstfruits (2:12, 14-16).
 - a. Must not be burnt on the altar (v.12).
 - b. Must be green ears of corn dried by fire (v.14).
 - c. Put oil on it and frankincense (v.15).
 - d. The priests would take part of it and burn it on the altar (v.16).
 4. General impositions (2:11, 13).
 - a. No leaven should be used in these offerings (v.11a).
 - b. No leaven should be burned on the altar (v.11b).
 - c. No honey (v.11c).
 - d. Seasoned with salt (v.13a).
 - e. Salt to be offered in all these offerings (v.13b).
- B. The Peace Offering (3:1-17).**
1. If the offering was of the herd (3:1-5).
 - a. Either male or female (v.1a).
 - b. Without blemish (v.1b).
 - c. Offerer must lay his hands on the head (v.2a).
 - d. Offerer must kill it at the door of the tabernacle (v.2b).
 2. If the offering was of the flock (3:6-11).
 - a. Either male or female lamb (vv.6a, 7).
 - b. Without blemish (v.6b).
 - c. Offerer must lay his hand on the head of the offering (v.8a).
 - d. Offerer must kill it before the tabernacle (v.8b).
 - e. The priests would sprinkle the blood around the altar (v.8c).
 - f. The fat on the inward parts, on the tail, the two kidneys would be burnt on the altar (vv.9-11).
 3. If the offering was a goat (3:12-16).
 - a. Offered it before the LORD (v.12).
 - b. Offerer must lay his hand on the head of the goat (v.13a).
 - c. Offerer must kill it (v.13b).
 - d. The priests would sprinkle the blood round about the altar (v.13c).
 - e. Priests would sprinkle the blood round about the altar (v.2c).
 - f. The fat on the inward parts and the liver and kidney would be separated (vv.3, 4).
 - g. These fat and the kidneys would be burnt on the altar (v.5a).
 - h. It was a sweet savour offering (v.5b).

- e. Must offer the fat covering all the inward parts above the liver and the two kidneys (vv.14, 15).
 - f. The priests would burn the offering on the altar (v.16a).
 - g. It was a sweet savour offering (v.16b).
 - h. All the fat belonged to the LORD (v.16c).
4. It was a perpetual statute (3:17).
- a. For all generations wherever they settled (v.17a).
 - b. They must abstain from eating fat and blood (v.17b).

COMMENTARY

The Grain Offering

Chapter 2 describes the grain offering. It has four natural divisions: uncooked grain (vv.1-3); cooked grain (vv.4-10); general requirements (vv.11-13); and firstfruits (vv.14-16).

This offering was given various names in the English translations -- "meat offering" (KJV), "meal offering" (ASV), "grain offering" (NASB, NKJV, NIV), and "cereal offering" (RSV). The reason why the word "meat" was used by the KJV translators was because during that time, "meat" was the common word for "food."¹ Today, we use it to mean animal meat. To avoid confusion, we will call it the "grain offering". The grain offering should come after the burnt offering. They are mentioned together in the book of Joshua (22:23, 29), Judges (13:23), 1 Kings (8:64), 2 Kings (16:13, 15), 1

Chronicles (21:23) and Nehemiah (10:33).

The grain offering was different from the burnt offering and the peace offering in that it was not an animal offering. The basic ingredient in the offering was fine flour (of wheat or barley), oil (usually olive), and frankincense (an incense). The offering could be uncooked or cooked. If it was cooked, it could be baked in an oven (v.4), or prepared on a griddle / flat pan (v.5), or fried in a deeper pan (v.7).

There were certain restrictions in making the grain offering. Leaven, a fermenting agent and a symbol of sin, must not be used. Honey, a fermenting ingredient, was similarly prohibited.

Salt was to be added to the grain offering. It was a preservative agent that would not be destroyed by fire, time or other means available in those days.² It was a symbol of permanence, purity and flavour. It was described here as *the salt of the covenant* of God (v.13). This was a reminder that the covenantal relationship between God and His people was eternal and could not be broken.

The offeror would bring the grain to the priests who would take a handful, called the *memorial portion*, and burned it in the fire on the altar. The remainder, the bulk of the grain, would be given to the priests for their provision. Similarly for the firstfruits (crushed heads of new grain roasted in fire), the priests would burn part of it. In contrast, everything in a burnt offering would be burnt in the fire on the altar.

What is the significance of this for us? Today we do not have to perform

¹ Demarest, 43.

² Wenham, 71.

all these rituals because Christ has fulfilled all of them for us. But the attitude and the essence of the offering made to God is spiritually instructive for us. It reminds us of our dependence on God who is the Provider of the grain. If the weather is not conducive, the grain will not grow well. We live in a world that exalts the idea of being self-made, self-sufficient, self-dependent and self-satisfied. We attribute our achievements to our own hard work. The grain offering teaches us to be thankful and grateful – to bring a portion of the grain to Him. Similarly, we ought to bring a portion of the fruits of our labour to the LORD. We must come before God with pure hearts and clean hands. It is clear that the offering provides for the livelihood of the priests who served the LORD full-time in the tabernacle. They received the remainder of the grain. The point is that God's people shared their produce with others. There is no division between the sacred and secular. This is a false separation. All things are the same before God. We should move away from thinking that God is there for our self-fulfilment. God has called us to share our blessings with others, especially those who are in need.

As we worship the Lord, let us also love and care for one another.

The Peace Offering

Chapter 3 falls naturally into three divisions, each giving a detailed description of the three types of peace offering: the offering of cattle (vv.1-5), the offering of sheep (vv.6-11), and the offering of goats (vv.12-17). One unique feature was that the offering could be a male or female cattle, sheep or goat. The reason for this was not stated. Another feature was the fellowship meal after the sacrifice.

The similarity was that the offering was made by fire on the altar as a *sweet aroma to the LORD*.

The peace offering was also called “shared offering” and “fellowship offering” because the sacrifice was followed by a meal. The traditional term “peace offering” was derived because the name of the offering, *shlamim*, was connected to the Hebrew word, “*shalom*”, which means “peace”.

The common feature of the three types of peace offerings was that the offerer must bring the animal to the door of the tabernacle. He would lay his hand on the head of the animal and kill it there. This act of laying his hand on the animal was symbolic of his identification with the animal, which took his place. The priests would sprinkle the blood around the brazen altar. The animal would be cut into pieces. Unlike the burnt offering, only the fat that covered the inward parts (the intestines), the two kidneys, and the fatty lobe of the liver would be burned on the altar. In the case of the sheep, the *whole rump*, that is the tail, which was cut close to the backbone, would be included. The priests were given the right thigh and breast of the animal (7:33, 34). The rest of the meat was eaten by the worshipper and his family.

The fat of the animal belonged to the LORD. Some suggested that it was for medical reason that the LORD prohibited the consumption of the fat. But then what about the two kidneys and liver? Others suggested that the fat was the very best part of the animal, while the kidneys and liver were the seat of a man's deepest emotions – the offerer was to give God his very best and his deepest love. The blood must not be eaten as it was regarded as the

source of life and an essential element in atonement. As such it was devoted wholly to God. In the New Testament, the Jerusalem Council prohibited all gentile believers from eating blood.³

PRACTICAL VALUE

The amount of blood being spilled every morning and evening for the burnt offering and the peace offering (which was optional) might seem gruesome to many – how could this be a sweet aroma to the LORD. A more accurate understanding would be the fact that the abundant sacrifices indicated the utter holiness of the LORD God, for without the shedding of blood, there could not be any atonement. Man could not approach God at all. These sacrifices should enhance our appreciation of the shedding of blood and the death of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ at *Golgotha*, the place of skull. The many animal sacrifices could not wash away our sins permanently; only the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ can.

The principle behind these three offerings of *sweet aroma unto the LORD* is that we should give our very best to the Lord in our worship and in our walk. We should give Him the best of the fruits of our labour knowing that all good and perfect things come from Him. Moreover, as our fellowship with God is deepened through these thanksgiving and peace offerings, we learn to share our God-given blessings with others in need, especially those in the household of God.

³ The eating of coagulated blood of pigs and chicken is an Oriental delight. It is believed that it cleanses the impurities in the stomach and system of the body. How much of this is medically true and proven is not known.

Let us walk in righteousness before the LORD our God who has done so much for us. Let us do more for God instead of just attending church on Sundays and other festive days. The words of Amos admonish us thus (5:21-24):

I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. {in...: or, your holy days}

Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. {peace...: or, thank offerings}

Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. {run: Heb. roll}

“Life that is not shaped by the worship of God becomes futile, and worship that does not shape the quality of life is irrelevant ritual.”⁴

Amen.

⁴Demarest, 32.

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

Monday: Leviticus 2:1-10; Psalm 107:19-22; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8.

Tuesday: Leviticus 2:11-16; Hebrews 13:15-16.

Wednesday: Leviticus 3:1-5; Romans 5:1; 1 John 1:3-7.

Thursday: Leviticus 3:6-11; Romans 6:1-6.

Friday: Leviticus 3:12-17; Colossians 3:1-15.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the significance that the “cereal offering” came after the burnt offering?

2. What is significant about “fine flour”, “oil” and “frankincense” used in the cereal offering?

3. What “memorial” is intended in the offering?

4. What is the principle behind the teaching that the main bulk of the offering was given to Aaron and the priests?

5. Why were leaven and honey forbidden?

6. Why was salt included in the offering?

7. What should be the proper attitude in our giving to the church of Christ?

8. Name one similarity and one difference between the burnt offering and the peace offering?

9. What part of the lamb was offered that was not included in the offering of the bullock?

10. Why does the fat belong to the LORD?

11. What effect do you think our 'fast-food society' has on the fact that meals are important occasions for communication and friendship?

12. What could be done to turn more mealtimes into celebration of fellowship?
