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The Peace Offering

Leviticus 3:1-17, 7:11-38

The peace offering DIG: How do the various laws fit the idea of reconciliation between God and His people: The part played by the worshiper? The priest? The blood? The fat? The fire? The altar? Why was eating any fat or blood strictly forbidden (Leviticus 17:11; Deuteronomy 12:23-25)?

REFLECT: When have you felt most alienated from God? How important is it to you that all barriers between yourself and God be removed? Why? What do you do to rebuild a relationship with Him: Say your prayers? Read the Bible? Give more money? Give more of yourself? Or what? How does this compare to the peace offering?

The peace offering was a voluntary act in which the worshiper accepted the meat from God as a token of His covenant faithfulness, and gave God acknowledgment and praise for His past blessings given. Any animal from the herd or flock could be used. The uniqueness of the peace offering was in the communal meal that the worshiper and his family ate before God.

The peace offering was placed upon **the burnt offering** and **the grain offering**, was presented last of all. With the sinner's guilt covered by **the blood** of the promised **Redeemer**; with **His** sins forgiven; with the whole burnt **offering** and grain **offering** satisfying the heart of **God the Father**, then that worshiper could know the blessed **peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1)**. The precious **blood** of the sinless **Substitute** covered his sins; he himself was accepted and loved by **the Son of the Father**; he was feeding his soul upon **the Bread of Life**. As a result, he could then have **peace with God**. For us today, **Jesus Christ is our peace (Ephesians 2:14)**.⁵⁴⁹

The Hebrew word for **the peace offering** is *shlamin*, a plural word coming from the word *shalom*, which means *peace, or to make peace*, and is usually preceded by the word *zevach*, meaning *sacrifice*. So literally it reads, *zevach shlamin*, or *sacrifice of peaces*. **These are the regulations for the peace offering a person may present to ADONAI (Leviticus 7:11)**. The presentation of a **peace offering** was conditioned on a **worshipers** having first

met the requirements of atonement (through a sin or guilt **offering**), and dedication (through burnt and meal offerings). An **offering from the herd** was the most expensive, a **lamb** was somewhat expensive, and the **offering of a goat** was the least expensive. No birds could be offered, because the peace offering was to be used for a festive meal and a bird would not provide enough food, so no bird **offering** could serve as a **peace offering**.



If someone's offering was a peace offering, and he offered **an animal from the herd**, whether male or female, he was to present before ADONAI an animal without defect. The worshiper laid **his hand on the head of his offering** before slaughtering it. The priest then sprinkled **the blood against the altar**. Then the worshiper cut the animal up, and the priest burned three parts: **all the fat that covered the inner parts** or was connected to them, **both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins**, and **the covering of the liver**, which he removed with the kidneys. The Hebrew word for kidneys comes from a Hebrew root which means *to yearn*. As a result, in the biblical Hebrew concept this was the seat of their emotions. "I love you with all my kidneys," isn't real romantic so English substitutes the word **heart (Job 19:27)**. Then the priest burned it on the altar, on top of the daily burnt offering that was already burning on the wood (Leviticus 3:1-5).

If he offered **an animal from the flock** as a peace offering to ADONAI, he was to offer a male or female without defect. That was the general rule. Then the flexibility of the peace offering was seen in the acceptability of either a lamb or a goat without defect. If he offered a lamb, he was to present it before God. He was to lay his hand on the head of his offering and then slaughter it on the north side of the bronze altar. Then Aaron's sons sprinkled its blood against the altar on all sides. Then the worshiper cut the animal up. Again not the whole offering was burnt, just certain parts. For the peace offering he was to bring a sacrifice made to ADONAI by fire: first, **its first layer of fat**, secondly, **the entire fat tail**, which could weigh as much as fifteen to twenty pounds by itself, cut off close to the backbone, and thirdly, **all the fat that**

covered the inner parts or was connected to them, which included **both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver, which he removed with the kidneys**. The priest then burned them on the altar as food (Leviticus 3:6-11).

If the offering was a goat, he was to present it before God. He was to lay his hand on its head and slaughter it in front of the Tabernacle. Then Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood against the altar on all sides. Again, the worshiper cut the animal up, but the whole **goat** did not **burn**, but merely certain parts. The same procedure was followed as with the lamb except for the fat tail.⁵⁵⁰ **The priest then burned them on the altar as food, an offering made by fire, a pleasing aroma.** Then the principle of why the fat was burned was stated: **All the fat is ADONAI's**, and therefore could not be eaten by any of the worshipers (Leviticus 3:12-16).

The Torah was also very clear-cut about the cleanness or uncleanness of the meat used along with the peace offering. The general rule for eating meat was that both the meat and its eater had to be **ceremonially clean** or it was **burned up**. But if anyone who is **unclean** ate any meat of the peace offering belonging to God, that person would die (Leviticus 22:3). If anyone touched anything **unclean - whether human uncleanness or an unclean animal or any unclean, detestable thing - and then** ate any of the meat of the peace offering belonging to ADONAI, that person would die (Leviticus 7:19-21). That point was so important that it is mentioned a second time.

The Torah was also very precise about not eating the fat or the blood of meat associated with the peace offering. Lastly, **Moses related to the Israelites** something very important that **God** had told him. He warned them: **Do not eat any of the fat of cattle, sheep or goats.** The fat of the animal found dead or torn by wild animals may be used for any other purpose (such as oil for lamps or for non-cooking purposes), but not for eating. **Anyone who ate the fat of an animal** had to die, because **all the fat is ADONAI's**. It was a symbol of offering the best to **God** (Genesis 45:18). This was a **lasting ordinance**, literally meaning *up to the end of a period of time for the generations to come*, wherever the Israelites lived, **they must not eat the blood of any bird or animal**, because it was the means of atonement. In addition, **if anyone ate blood, that person** would also die (Leviticus 3:17, 7:22-27). In other words, as long as the Torah was in force, the Jews were **not to eat any fat or blood**.

Lastly, the Torah was also very exact about the priests' share of the peace offering. Anyone who brought a peace offering was to bring part of it as his sacrifice to ADONAI. He was to bring the fat, together with the breast and the right thigh, and

wave them **before God as a wave offering**. The Hebrew word for **wave offering** comes from a root that means *to swing or to move back and forth*. It was a ceremony that was unique to **the peace offering** and the consecration offerings (**Leviticus 14:12 and 24, 23:11-12, 23:20; Numbers 5:25, 6:20, 8:11-13**). **The rabbis teach that the priest would lay the offering upon the hands of the worshiper, then he placed his own hands underneath the worshipers hands and moved both their hands forward toward the bronze altar in a horizontal direction, symbolizing giving it to God, and backward toward the priest, symbolizing receiving it back from God as a gift. The priest then burned the fat on the bronze altar, but the breast belonged to the priest. So after the waving, the breast became a gift for all the priests to share with their families (Leviticus 7:31-34; Numbers 18:11-12).**

Besides **the breast**, the priest was to receive the **right thigh of the peace offering** as a *trumah*, meaning a **contribution**. **The rabbis teach that in contrast to the breast, the right thigh was waved up and down. Waving it up symbolized giving it to God, and down symbolized God giving it back to the priest. The officiating priest who offered the blood and the fat of the peace offering received the right thigh as his share. So from the peace offerings of the Israelites, God took the breast that was waved sideways and the right thigh that was waved up and down, and gave them to the priests as their regular share of food.** That was **the portion allotted to the priests on the day they were anointed. On that day, ADONAI commanded that the Israelites give the breast and the right thigh of the meat portion of the peace offering to them as their regular share as long as the Torah was in effect (Leviticus 7:28-36).**

A blood offering always preceded the peace offering, because the basis of peace between man and God is always a blood sacrifice. Once the atonement and dedication requirements had been met, the worshiper was free to proceed with **the peace offering**. There were three different types of **peace offerings: the thanksgiving offering, the vow offering and the fellowship offering.**

First, there was **the thanksgiving offering**, which was almost synonymous with **the fellowship offering (Second Chronicles 29:31, 33:16; Jeremiah 17:26)**, and was offered voluntarily as an acknowledgment of **God's blessing in answer to prayer (Psalm 56:12-13, 107:22, 116:17-19; Jeremiah 33:11)**. If the worshiper offered it as an expression of thankfulness, then along with his thank offering he was to offer **cakes of bread made without yeast and mixed with oil before cooking, wafers made without yeast and spread with oil after the cooking, and cakes of fine flour well-kneaded and mixed with oil before and after cooking. It was made without yeast, because it was to be**

burned on the bronze altar. **Along with his peace offering of thanksgiving he was to present an offering with cakes of bread made *with* yeast**, because it was not to be burned **on the bronze altar**. It was only used for eating. **He was to bring one of each** of the three kinds of **peace offerings as a contribution to ADONAI**; it belonged **to the priest who sprinkled the blood of the meat** portion of the **peace offerings (Leviticus 7:12-14, 22:29)**. The **cakes of bread made with yeast** were then taken by the worshiper to eat with his family.

The Torah was very specific about *when* the meat accompanying a peace offering could be eaten. The meat of his peace offering *had to be eaten on the day it was offered*; he *couldn't leave any of it till morning*. If, however, his offering was the result of the second kind of **peace offering, the vow offering (7:16, 27:9-10)**, which was mandatory after fulfilling a **vow**, such as the Nazirite **vow (Numbers 6:14-17)**; or thirdly, **the fellowship offering**, which was voluntarily offered after receiving an unexpected blessing (7:16, 22:17-20), the sacrifice had to **be eaten on the day he offered it, but anything left over could be eaten on the next day**. **Any meat of the sacrifice left over till the third day must be burned up** because ADONAI would not accept it. It would **not be credited to the one who offered it, for it was impure, or pigul**, literally meaning *a stench* (Leviticus 19:7; Isaiah 65:4; Ezekiel 4:14). The person who ate **any of it** was **held responsible** for his or her own punishment (Leviticus 7:15-18).

These, then, were the regulations for the sin offering, the guilt offering, the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the peace offering, which ADONAI gave Moses on Mount Sinai on the day He commanded the Israelites to bring their offerings to ADONAI in the Desert of Sinai (Leviticus 7:37-38).

Once the sin and guilt offerings had been made, and the peace offering, along with its accompanying burnt and meal offerings had been sacrificed, the Israelite had peace with God (Romans 5:1). Do you have **peace** with **God**? If so, that's great. If not, would you like to accept **Christ** right now? If so, there is a prayer I would like you to repeat. But before you do I want you to remember that saying a prayer does not save you, trusting in **Christ** does. Say these words: **God, I admit that I have sinned. I believe Jesus Christ died for my sins, and I want to trust Him to save me right now.** If you were to die right now, where would you go? That's right, heaven. Why should **God** let you into heaven? That's right, because **Jesus** died to pay for your sins.⁵⁵¹ If you have prayed this prayer, see my commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click [Bw](#) - What God Does for Us at the Moment of Faith**).

Jesus' last words from the cross were: **It is finished (John 19:30)**. That is the translation in Aramaic because that was the common language of His day. But the original Greek text in the New Covenant reads, *tetelestai*, which means **paid in full**. This word is actually an accounting term. After the destruction of Herod's Temple in AD 70, many Jews found their way to Alexandria, Egypt. There they had one of the greatest libraries of the ancient world by the second century. But by then, the international language was Greek. And while the Jews spoke Aramaic, they wrote in Greek, not Hebrew. Archaeologists have discovered an underground storage area there with thousands of clay accounting tablets. Across each one was written *tetelestai*. It is important for you to understand that your sins have been **paid in full** by the blood of **the Messiah** on the cross. *All* of your sin, past, present, and future. And as a result, you now possess **living water (John 4:4-14, 7:37-39; Revelation 7:17)**, or eternal life **(John 6:37-40; 10:27-30)**.