

LEVITICUS 3:1-17

SCRIPTURE

V. 1a “When his offering is a sacrifice of a *peace offering*...”

1. **Peace Offering**: Hebrew *šelem* (sheh'-lem)

- Translated as peace, friendship, or fellowship.
- Why was it offered?
 - “If a man were in pursuit of any mercy, he would add a peace-offering to his prayer for it. Christ is our Peace, our Peace-offering; for through him alone it is that we can obtain an answer of peace to our prayers. Or, the peace-offering was offered by way of thanksgiving for some mercy received.” ~ Matthew Henry
 - “A peace offering was a voluntary tribute of gratitude for health or other benefits. In this view it was eucharistic, being a token of thanksgiving for benefits already received, or it was sometimes votive [offered as a vow], presented in prayer for benefits wished for in the future.” ~ Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

Chapter 3 Outline

- V. 1-5: Of the Herd (Cattle, Oxen)
- V. 6-1: Of the Flock (Sheep, Ram, Lamb)
- V. 12-17: Goats

V. 1b “if he offers it of the **HERD**, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD.”

- **Male OR Female**: “Females were allowed here, though not in burnt-offerings [which were for God]... but the peace-offerings did primarily respect the benefit of the offerer, and therefore the choice was left to himself.” ~ Rev. Joseph Benson (1748–1821), an early Methodist leader

V. 2-3a “ And he shall lay his hand ¹ on the head of his offering, and kill it at the door ² of the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron’s sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood ³ all around on the altar. Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire ⁴ to the LORD.”

- **Shares Some Procedure with the Burnt Offering**:

1. **Lay his hand**:

- Confession, Designation, Transference

2. **At the door**:

- Public acknowledgment

3. **Blood**:

- In this case though, blood was sprinkled on the altar not for atonement, but to sanctify the sacrifice and consecrate the worshiper's offering for fellowship with God.

4. **Fire**:

- Purification

V. 3b-4 “The **fat** that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails¹, the **two kidneys**² and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the **liver**³ above the kidneys, he shall remove...”

Here it differs from the Burnt Offering.

1. The fat / entrails:

- The large net which stretches from the stomach over the bowels and completely envelopes.
- The fat attached to the intestines.

2. Kidneys: considered the seat of emotions and inner thoughts (represented the “soul” of the person.) (BibleHub)

3. Fatty lobe attached to the liver: *Omentum minus* (the liver-net) (BibleHub)

“The four portions mentioned comprehended all the separable fat in the inside of the sacrificial animal.” ~ Keil and Delitzsch
Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament

Why Separate these things?

- 1. The fat / entrails:** All the fat belongs to God. When fat is burned, it creates energy and symbolizes effort and work. God does the work, not us.
- 2. Kidneys:** The entirety of the person’s soul should be consumed by God.
- 3. Fatty lobe attached to the liver:** Because reading livers was a custom in the pagan world (Ez. 21:21), burning the top part of the liver showed that you trusted and depended on God alone for your future.

V. 5 “...and Aaron’s sons shall burn it on the altar **upon the burnt sacrifice**, which is on the wood that is on the fire, as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.”

Upon the burnt sacrifice:

- Some translations say along with the burnt offering, some say on top of the burnt offering. This was in case the Peace offering was given along with a burnt offering.
- “The burnt offering, which was entirely consumed by fire, symbolized atonement and complete surrender to God. By placing the peace offering atop it, it shows that reconciliation and fellowship with God are built upon the foundation of atonement.” (BibleHub)

V. 6-9a “If his offering as a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD is of the **FLOCK**, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish. If he offers a lamb as his offering, then he shall offer it before the LORD. And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron’s sons shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar. Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering, as an offering made by fire to the LORD, its fat and the **whole fat tail** which he shall remove close to the backbone.”

- “The whole rump (fat tail) could weigh as much as 15 lbs. It was considered one of the most valuable parts of the animal and was given entirely over to the Lord.” ~ Wiersbe

- “The sheep of Syria and Palestine were, and still are, the bread-tailed species, the broad part often weighing fifteen pounds and upwards. In young animals, the substance of the tail, which consists of marrow and fat, tastes like marrow, and it is used by the Arabs for cooking instead of butter.” ~ Ellicott

V. 9b – 16 “*And the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; and the priest shall burn them on the altar as food [for God], an offering made by fire to the LORD.*

And if his offering is a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD. He shall lay his hand on its head and kill it before the tabernacle of meeting; and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar. Then he shall offer from it his offering, as an offering made by fire to the LORD. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; and the priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma; all the fat is the LORD's.”

V. 17 “*This shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall eat neither fat nor blood.”*

- Also translated as “permanent”. This means it falls under those laws that are to be kept universally and for all time.
- “The Hebrew word used here, “*chukkat olam*,” suggests an ordinance that transcends time, emphasizing the unchanging nature of God's holiness and the need for His people to remain distinct. This concept of permanence is echoed in other parts of the Torah, such as the Sabbath (Exodus 31:16) and the Passover (Exodus 12:14).” ~ BibleHub

FAT:

1. As mentioned before, when fat is burned, it creates energy and symbolizes effort and work. God does the work, not us.
2. Fat was valuable. The most valuable parts should go to God.

BLOOD:

1. The life of the flesh is in the blood, it is for atonement only. – Lev. 17:10-14
2. In opposition to the pagans who drank blood in their rituals.
3. Out of respect to Christ's blood, which we only drink symbolically with wine or grape juice.

CONCLUSION

To be continued...

The peace offering is the only one that the offerer gets to partake of.

- The blood gets sprinkled around the altar
- The fat, tail (rump), and kidneys get burned on the altar
- The priest gets the breast and thigh of the animal
- The offerer takes the rest home to host a feast of thanksgiving.

We will discuss the particulars of this when we cover chapter 7!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Read Hebrews Chapter 10. Make a list of all the connections you can find between it and the first three chapters of Leviticus and the sacrifices we have studied – Burnt, Grain, and Peace.
2. Why is blood necessary in a Peace offering if the main purpose is not atonement?
3. Why was the Peace offering placed on top of the Burnt Offering?
4. Explain how we as Christians can keep the perpetual statutes of the Sabbath and the Passover without being subject to the Jewish Law.