

# The Peace Offering (Leviticus 3, 7:11-36)

To Read:

1. Exodus 24
2. I Corinthians 10, 11:17-34

## I. Introduction

### A. This morning we are continuing our study of Leviticus together

1. As we start another morning in Leviticus, I want to remember what the main point of Leviticus is - how can Israel dwell with a holy God? And, as we apply it to ourselves, how can we dwell with a holy God?
2. And, if we put our outline up on the board, we're in the first half of the book, what we've titled "Judicial Holiness," which is answering the question, "How do we become holy?"
3. And we're continuing in the first subsection, what we've titled "Provision for holiness" in Leviticus 1-7 which describes the sacrificial system

### 1 B. And we see five types of sacrifice as we read these first chapters of Leviticus

1. Several weeks ago we started with the Burnt Offering and talked about propitiation and satisfying God's wrath
  - 2 a. So, if we go back to our table that we started last week, the burnt offering taught us that sin has made God very angry with us, sin has provoked God's wrath
  - 1 b. So we need a sacrifice that will absorb and turn away God's wrath, a sacrifice that will make us acceptable before God again
2. Then we looked at the Grain Offering and considered how we owe ourselves in worship to God
  - 1 a. And the Grain Offering didn't fit very well on our table because it wasn't a sacrifice like the other sacrifices, it didn't exist to cover sin in some way, so we set it off at the bottom
  - 2 b. The Grain Offering shows us that we belong to God so we owe ourselves to God in worship
- 2 3. This week, we are going to look at the third offering in Leviticus 3, the sacrifice often known as the Peace Offering
- 2 4. And then, in a few weeks, we are going to look at the Sin Offering and then the Guilt Offering

### 1 C. Let's read the passages about the grain offering, Leviticus 3 which is written for the one bringing the offering and Leviticus 7:11-36 which is written for the priest

- 1 D. **Proposition:** The peace offering shows us that sin has destroyed our relationship with God and with each other, so we need a sacrifice that reconciles and restores, first our relationship with God and also our relationship with each other
  - 1 1. What did it teach the ancient Israelites about God?
  - 1 2. How should this point us to Christ?
  - 1 3. How should this be applied to the New Testament believer?

## 1 II. What did this teach the ancient Israelites about God?

### A. As we come to the offering that we're calling the peace offering, we are returning to a blood sacrifice - a sacrifice of an animal that was meant, in some way, to atone for or to cover sin

1. And, though we call the offering the peace offering, I don't think that carries the right connotation in English
2. The Hebrew word here for the peace offering '*shelem*' is closely related to the Hebrew word that we often translate peace, '*shalam*', but the Hebrew word for peace is much more intense than the English word
  - a. For example, we could say that our country is at peace with the Russians - we aren't currently engaged in hostilities, there is no declaration of war, we aren't shooting at each other
  - b. But most people wouldn't mistake our nations as friends - we may be 'at peace' but we aren't in a close relationship with the Russians, we are often striving against each other, trying to assert our own interests
  - c. We could call that relationship a peaceful relationship in English, but we couldn't call that a peaceful relationship in Hebrew, because *shalam* means a deeper peace than simply not hostile toward each other
3. *Shalam* and by derivation the offering *shelem* has to do with fellowship, the sort of relationship that you would have with family and close friends, the sort of relationship where you enjoy sitting down to a meal together
- 1 4. That's what this offering is about, it's a fellowship offering - an offering that restores fellowship, friendship, a relationship where you are working for each other's good, for each other's joy, a relationship where you enjoy each other - and that's why this offering is centered on a meal
5. The enmity, the hostile relationship with God that sin led us into has already been set aside and covered in the burnt offering - God's wrath has been propitiated - but the peace offering seeks to go beyond that - to bring not merely peace, as we would say, but fellowship, relationship, joy
6. So, now that we understand what the image here in the peace offering or the fellowship offering is about, let's think about what this teaches us about God, about ourselves and about sacrifice

### 1 B. The first thing this offering shows us is that sin has broken fellowship with God and each other

1. This is impetus for the peace offering, this truth stands behind the peace offering - if our relationship with God and with each other was right and good, there would be no need for a peace offering, no need for reconciliation
2. But sin destroys relationships - and we all know that, that's not a truth that needs a lot of exposition - every relationship is harmed by the effects of sin, we hurt each other, cause distrust, disloyalty, pain, sorrow - there can be no deep peace, no real fellowship when sin is present
3. And the peace offering reminded the Israelites of that truth every time they brought the sacrifice - my sin has destroyed relationships, first my relationship with God and then my relationship with everyone else
4. I need a sacrifice that can mend my broken relationships, that can restore fellowship with God and with others

### 1 C. But this brings us to the promise of the sacrifice, communion can be restored through the blood of the sacrifice

- 1 1. Leviticus 3:1-2 - "*If his offering is a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offers an animal from the herd, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD. And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and kill it at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons the priests shall throw the blood against the sides of the altar.*"
- 2 2. The peace offering presupposes that there are broken relationships because of sin, but it also provides an answer - a sacrifice whose blood is thrown on the sides of the altar
3. We can see this sprinkled blood as serving two purposes, first, the blood was sprinkled on the altar to cover over sin, so that the effects of sin would no longer hamper the relationship - sin would no longer prevent God from entering into relationship with His people
4. But there are covenant overtones here, which is why we read Exodus 24 earlier this morning - in Exodus 24 we see the covenant at Sinai sealed with burnt offerings and peace offerings and what happens with those offerings matches very closely what happens with the peace offering
5. The blood of the offerings was put in bowls and sprinkled on two things, twelve pillars representing the tribes of Israel and Mount Sinai where God spoke - and the blood represented a new relationship formed in covenant, a relationship formed from one blood, even a marriage covenant between God and Israel
6. And that same imagery is buried here in the peace offering - a relationship has been destroyed, BUT the sin that destroyed that relationship can be covered over and a new, even deeper relationship can be realized
7. The peace offering reminded the Israelite, "my sin has destroyed relationship," but it also promised him, "God has graciously provided a covenant through which I can have an even greater relationship with Him."

- 1 D. **And once communion is restored there can be great joy because, Communion is realized through a covenant meal**
1. Leviticus 3 implies something important about the grain offering without specifically mentioning it - the main difference between the peace offering and the burnt offering was what happened to the animal afterward
    - a. In both sacrifices the offerer laid his hand on the animal, in both sacrifices the blood was thrown on the altar, but in the burnt offering the sacrifice was then burnt completely to satisfy God's wrath
    - b. In the peace offering, only part of the animal was put on the altar; the rest was shared as a covenant meal
  - 1 2. And we see strong hints of that in Leviticus 3 and Leviticus 7, especially in Leviticus 7:15 - *And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten on the day of his offering.*
    - a. The offerer brought his sacrifice and then participated in the sacrifice by using it at the centerpiece of a meal - and as we go through Scripture we see this meal was often shared, a celebration by a family, a group, or even an entire kingdom that they are in fellowship with one another
  - 1 3. But it wasn't only shared with one another, the meal was shared with God as well, Leviticus 3:9-11 - *Then from the sacrifice of the peace offering he shall offer as a food offering to the LORD its fat; he shall remove the whole fat tail, cut off close to the backbone, and the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys. And the priest shall burn it on the altar as a food offering to the LORD.*
    - 1 a. The first portion of the offering actually went to God, and it is specifically called a food offering - the word for food is used in Leviticus 3:11 in a way that it isn't used in any of the other sacrifices
    - b. The covenant meal was first shared with God in God's presence and then shared with each other - a symbol that the relationship had been fully restored, and the offerer could celebrate in God's presence
  4. That meal was incredibly important and it harkened back again to what had happened in Exodus 24 - after the sacrifice seventy of the elders of Israel went up on the mountain of God and they ate and drank together in God's presence and God did not destroy them - they saw God and ate and drank
    - a. If we understand sin rightly, that's a statement that should completely baffle us - how could such things be?
    - b. But the peace offering promised that kind of fellowship to the offerer every time they brought their offering, because of the sacrifice, real communion with God and with each other was possible and was realized
- 2 E. **But, as we go on, we need to consider a couple of qualifications, so fourth, Communion with God is communion between a sovereign and a subject**
1. What I mean by this is that the peace offering may have promised a restored relationship with God to the offerer, but that didn't make God and the offerer equal - they approached each other through a renewed relationship, but also the right relationship - God was still the sovereign and the offerer was still the subject
  - 1 ✕ 2. We see this truth embedded in the apportionment of the offering, Leviticus 3:3-5 - *And from the sacrifice of the peace offering, as a food offering to the LORD, he shall offer the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins, and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys. Then Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering, which is on the wood on the fire; it is a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.*
  3. This might sound to us like an odd selection to give to God, but these pieces were selected as the best of the animal, the fat of the animal - fat represented the best portion of anything, in fact the Israelites would call the finest wheat, the fat of the wheat, so the fat was given to God
  - 1 1 4. And, consequently, the Israelites were not to partake of the fat, Leviticus 7:22-25 - *The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, You shall eat no fat, of ox or sheep or goat. The fat of an animal that dies of itself and the fat of one that is torn by beasts may be put to any other use, but on no account shall you eat it. For every person who eats of the fat of an animal of which a food offering may be made to the LORD shall be cut off from his people.*
  5. This strong command and prohibition reminded the offerer every time he came that his relationship to God had been restored, but it had been restored to the proper relationship, that of sovereign and subject
  6. This called for great joy and deep fellowship, but not casual familiarity or frivolity - he got to eat with the Holy King of the Universe, and he should offer his best to the King

## 2 F. And finally, fifth, Communion with God requires purity

1. Leviticus 7:19-21 - *"Flesh that touches any unclean thing shall not be eaten. It shall be burned up with fire. All who are clean may eat flesh, but the person who eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of the LORD's peace offerings while an uncleanness is on him, that person shall be cut off from his people. And if anyone touches an unclean thing, whether human uncleanness or an unclean beast or any unclean detestable creature, and then eats some flesh from the sacrifice of the LORD's peace offerings, that person shall be cut off from his people."*
2. The peace offering welcomed God's people to come and sit at table with Him, enjoying renewed fellowship through the blood of the covenant sacrifice - but this blood wasn't some sort of magic potion, a talisman that they brought to curry favor with God
3. So fellowship with God required purity - the offerer could not approach God in a state of impurity, here it's talking about a state of ritual impurity that could happen through a wide variety of events, but that ritual requirement pointed to a deeper truth
4. God's people needed to approach God with a pure heart - they couldn't rely on the peace offering to cover over their sins and restore fellowship with God if they were running wholeheartedly after sin - the peace offering wasn't there to use as a band-aid anytime they wanted to eat with God
5. The peace offering was for those who oriented their whole life around fellowship with God, who pursued things that helped them have fellowship with God and turned away from things that would hamper their fellowship with God, especially turning away from things that God hated
6. The offerer could not pursue God and pursue sin and this world at the same time - the fellowship meal had to be eaten by those who were clean
7. Now this points us forward to the sin offering and back the burnt offering, because every Israelite would be unclean at some point, and every Israelite would be disbarred from the table
8. So this requirement called the offerer to consider how he pursues God in all of life, but also called Him to run to the atonement when he failed
9. This table was only for those who had been made clean by the sacrifice and who walked in cleanliness partaking of the sacrifice - those who ate in an impure manner placed themselves in great danger, of even being cut off from God's people

## 1 3 G. TABLE

## 2 H. Kid's Question

### 1 III. How should this point us to Christ?

#### 1 A. Jesus is our covenant sacrifice

1. The peace offering longed for and looked for a sacrifice that could make a new covenant between God and man, a sacrifice whose blood would reconcile and restore
2. And this is exactly what Jesus has done for us - He is the answer to the promise of the Peace Offering
- 1 2 2 3. Hebrews 12:22-24 - *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*
4. Jesus has become the mediator of a new covenant, a new relationship, precisely because His blood has spoken a better word than the blood of able
5. Able's blood called out for justice, vengeance and retribution, but Jesus' blood called out for peace, for fellowship, for reconciliation - Able's blood spoke only a curse, Jesus' blood has spoken a blessing over us
6. Jesus' blood is the blood sprinkled on the altar that not only propitiates God's wrath, like the burnt offering, but restores fellowship - a new bond between us and God is forged in the blood of Christ

#### 1 B. And if He is our covenant sacrifice, then it is no surprise that Jesus has provided our covenant meal

1. The hallmark of the peace offering was a joyful celebration of a fellowship meal after the sacrifice, provided by the sacrifice, that symbolized reunion and fellowship with God
2. And Jesus has invited us to sit and to eat of the final sacrifice, His own body and blood - He has invited us to a table with the Most High God and with each other
3. There are echoes of several of the sacrifices in what Jesus says surrounding the Last Supper, but the clearest and strongest ties are to the Peace Offering - sharing together a fellowship meal provided by the sacrifice
- 1 4. Luke 22:19-20 - *And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.*
5. Not only has Jesus answered the promise of the Peace Offering, but He has also provided the joy of the Peace Offering - we can realize the fellowship with God won for us by Christ through sharing a meal over the sacrifice

#### 1 C. Jesus has restored fellowship with God and with each other

1. The purpose of the peace offering was to reconcile and restore relationship both with God and with each other - sin had destroyed any possibility of relationship, but the sacrifice would remedy that
2. And Jesus has not only answered the promise of the Peace offering and provided it's joy, He has also fulfilled its purpose - in Christ we are reconciled with God and with each other, not only has the enmity been set aside but a new relationship has been formed, a relationship of 'shalam', of peace
- 1 3. So Christ has reconciled us to God, II Corinthians 5:18-20 - *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*
  - a. At the core, the offer of the gospel is an offer of reconciliation - enemies can become friends - and this is precisely because Jesus shed His blood for us to reconcile us to God
- 1 4. And He has reconciled us to each other, Ephesians 2:14-16 - *For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.*
  - a. Apart from the gospel, humanity will always be at war with each other, sin will always corrupt relationships, any peace, any relationship will only be a temporary, self-serving peace
  - b. But, in Christ, the pain and curse that sin brings that destroys relationships with each other has found its salve and cover in Christ - we can truly be at peace with each other because we are united in Christ

## ① IV. How does this apply to us?

### ① A. First, we should pursue fellowship with God in Christ

1. If the Peace Offering and its great fulfillment in Christ promises us fellowship with God, then we ought to run after that opportunity, we ought to be grasping after fellowship with God
- ① 2. Our heart should rejoice to respond to Isaiah's exhortation in Isaiah 55:1-7 - *"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. "Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*
3. If we have been promised fellowship with God, then that ought to be our great goal and our great joy - to spend time in relationship with the God of the universe
4. So time in prayer, time in the Word, time in meditation will not be drudgeries but delights - and this isn't merely personal, really not even primarily personal, so church attendance where we get to sit at the feast of Christ will not be a requirement, a weekly duty but our greatest joy, our first priority to which everything else submits
5. As good protestants, our best understanding of Scripture is that the elements we serve every week at the Lord's Table are symbols, but not mere symbols - they are symbols of real fellowship, of real reconciliation, of joy together in God's presence - so we ought not to neglect such great things - come, sit, eat with God Himself

### ① B. Second, we should pursue purity so that we can rejoice in fellowship with God in Christ

- a. Enjoying the fellowship of the Peace Offering did have some requirements, primarily purity for the worshipper
  - a. The worshipper could not presume to feast with God if he was at the same time pursuing the world
- b. And that truth applies to us as well, in fact, Paul will warn us sternly in I Corinthians 11:27-32 - *Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.*
- c. Our lives ought to be devoted to purity, to running after the things that God loves because we love fellowship with Him - in fact, that's one way to define purity, running after the things that increase our fellowship with God
- ① ① d. So, if last week we asked, "how is what I'm doing right now worship?" Then this week we'll add another question, "how is what I'm doing right now pursuing fellowship with God?"
- ① e. They're very similar questions, in the end, but they may help us think through our day-to-day and even moment-by-moment activities - is this thing helping me rejoice in my fellowship with Christ or is it distracting me from that, hindering that fellowship?
  - f. Is my whole life marked by a desire to pursue fellowship with God in purity, or am I staining myself with the world? Am I prepared to partake at the Lord's Table today, or am I harboring sin in my heart?
  - g. Those are serious and sober questions, and I fear that all of us fail at many times and in many ways, but there is also hope - the gospel has never been, "if you are good enough you can come," but, "the one who repents from evil will be covered"
  - h. So, inasmuch as you come unworthy this week, examine yourself, repent, and come to the Table - you are welcome because of Christ - but don't purpose in your heart to return to the same impurities



**1 C. Third, we should pursue fellowship with each other in Christ**

- a. The peace offering promised restored relationships in two dimensions and Christ has won both for us, so if we have been reconciled to one another in Christ, then we should pursue relationship with each other as well
- 1** b. So Paul reminds us that our time at Table together shows us who we are, I Corinthians 10:16-17 - *The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.*
- c. We are reconciled in Christ so we ought to act like that, we ought to pursue each other in love, to make our relationships with each other high priority, to display the unity we have with each other to a watching world
- 1** d. So maybe we could add one more question about our activities this week - Is this thing helping me pursue the body of Christ, especially those with whom I share the Lord's supper, or is it distracting me from that?
- e. If we have been reconciled we ought to run after each other - not being merely those who pass each other on a Sunday morning, but those who have been entered into a covenant together that is even greater than marriage
- f. How can you pursue your church family in that way? How can you display the unity that Christ has won for us?

**1 D. Fourth, we should be careful with what we make peace**

- a. In I Corinthians, Paul rejoices in our fellowship meal together provided by the sacrifice, the fellowship around the Lord's Table, but he also recognizes that there are other fellowships as well
- 1** b. So He says in I Corinthians 10:19-22 - *What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?*
- c. Paul warns us strongly against thinking that we can pursue real fellowship with God while we participate in the false fellowship of the world - we can't sit at the Table of the Lord and the Table of demons at the same time!
- d. Now, perhaps there was some clarity in the situation in which Paul spoke these words - there were actual tables on which other sacrifices were laid - but I'm convinced that these words still ring true for us
- e. There are other fellowships in this world, other apparent comradeships, other unions around with sinful man will band together and we need to be very careful about these things
- f. I'm not going to make any declarations this morning about what things might be false fellowships, but this ought to be on our mind - is this thing I'm participating in, fellowshiping in, is this something I should be making peace with? Is this something that really belongs to God or is this something that is participating in the world?
- g. Think about that as you go through life, should I be at peace with this or is this calling me to a foreign fellowship?
- h. If Christ has bought us such a glorious fellowship with the very God of the Universe, we shouldn't be running after other fellowships, participating in other unions. What fellowship has Christ with Belial?
- 1** i. II Corinthians 6:14-18 - *Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."*