

Chapter 3

The Peace Offering



Leviticus 3:1 *Now if his offering is a sacrifice of peace offerings, if he is going to offer out of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without defect before the LORD.*

[Peace offering photo from throughthebibleinfiveandahalfyears.blogspot.com]

The peace offering reflects the believer's **fellowship** with God. The word for "peace offering" שְׁלָמִים (*shelamim*) is from the root word שָׁלַם (*shelem*). According to Strong's, it is: *a sacrifice for alliance or friendship, peace offering: – peace offering (2), peace offerings (85)*. Of course, we know the root word best from the common Hebrew greeting שָׁלוֹם (*shalom*). So the peace offering is for an alliance of friendship with God.

It is an overstatement to say Israel, or the church, for that matter, is a friend of God. But this offering is as close to that as one gets. It, therefore, seems appropriate to call this an offering to maintain fellowship with God. After they brought a burnt offering as an **atonement** for their sinful condition, and a grain offering as a **dedication** to God, they could bring a peace offering as a symbol of their desire for **fellowship** with God. But notice, each of these require a sacrifice, indicating that sin stands in the way of each.

This offering could be either a male or female, but it had to be without defect. So the sin of the people made a sacrifice necessary in order for them to fellowship with God, and the holy character of God made it necessary that the sacrifice be without defect.

Leviticus 3:2-5 records the procedure for offering a peace offering out of the herd. Actually, the procedure begins in verse one. The sequence is as follows:

1. He may select either a *male or female*,
2. *He shall offer it without defect before the LORD.*
3. *He shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and*
4. *He shall slay it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and*
5. *Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood around on the altar.*
6. *From the sacrifice of the peace offerings he shall present an offering by fire to the LORD.*

First, he shall remove:

- *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, which is on the loins,*
- *and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys.*

Then Aaron's sons shall offer it up in smoke on the altar on the burnt offering, which is on the wood that is on the fire; it is an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.

[Picture from oneyearbibleimages.com.]



Leviticus 3:6-11 records the procedure for offering a peace offering from the flock.

The sequence required for presenting a peace offering from the flock contains essentially the same six steps listed for the offering from the herd.

Leviticus 3:12-16 records the procedure for offering a goat as a peace offering.

The sequence required for presenting a goat as a peace offering contain essentially the same six steps listed for the offering from the herd or flock. Steps 1 and 2 above are not listed for the goat, but they can be assumed as being the same. Also, a few slight differences exist in the removal of the fat in different animals.

Leviticus 3:17 It is a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall not eat any fat or any blood.

This chapter-concluding statement forbids the eating of fat or blood. I know of no biblical explanation for either of these prohibitions. In the case of fat, one might speculate that it is because the eating of fat was unhealthy, but then why was it not prohibited for the Church (Acts 12)?

The blood prohibition is easier to understand. When mankind was finally allowed to eat meat, at the time of Noah, they were not allowed to eat the blood (Genesis 9:3-4). At the Church council in Acts 15, there were only a few regulations mentioned concerning Gentile believers, but one of them was that they were to *abstain from* (presumably eating) *blood* (Acts 15:20).

The reason is most likely the one given here in Leviticus, *For the life of the flesh is in the blood* (Leviticus 17:11, 14). The blood sacrifice was essential because it represented the life of the animal substituted for the life of the one doing the sacrifice. So the blood was set apart because it represented the sacrificed life. Undoubtedly, it was also special to God because the blood of Christ, which actually paid for our sins, was sacred. Jesus told the crowd gathered around Him in the synagogue at Capernaum: *He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day* (John 6:54). Here *eats* refers to faith and the *flesh and blood* of Jesus refers to His death on the cross. As Paul wrote: *Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him* (Romans 5:9) So it seems blood was not to be trivialized by eating it.

[Drawing from www.have-faith-in-god-uk.org.]



AS AN APPLICATION:

- Romans 12:1 could be applied to many of the sacrifices, but it seems to fit best here. Paul says *to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God*. In order to stay in fellowship with God, we need a peace offering. But for the Church, our own bodies are the offering. That fellowship of peace with God can only exist when we continually present our bodies as a living holy sacrifice.
- Since the prohibition of eating blood was included for the Church in the letter from the council of Acts 15, we should continue to avoid the eating of blood (as in blood soup or blood sausage).

FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST: Jesus said: *Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful* (John 14:27)