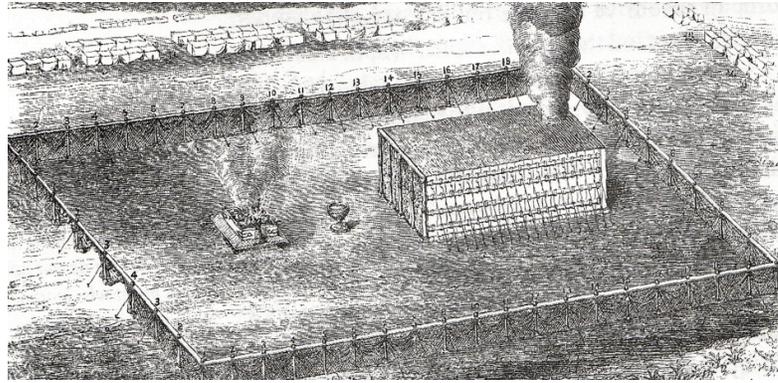


# Leviticus Chapter 7 Sacrifice Regulations for the Priests – Part 2



The regulations for the priests continue in chapter 7 with instructions for performing the guilt offering (7:1-10) and the peace offering (11-38). [Picture from [thesentone.files.wordpress.com](http://thesentone.files.wordpress.com).]

## The Guilt Offering

**Leviticus 7:1-2** *Now this is the law of the guilt offering; it is most holy. In the place where they slay the burnt offering they are to slay the guilt offering, and he shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar.*

This may be a good time to talk about *the place where they slay the burnt offering*. According to Leviticus 1:11, *He shall slay it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD*. The Tabernacle, like the Temple later on, always faced East. When it sat in the wilderness next to Mount Horeb (Sinai) where Moses originally set it up, it faced the wilderness with its back toward Egypt. This was the case every time they set it up during their wilderness wanderings.



Finally, when they entered the land, they set the Tabernacle up at Shiloh, where they built the first Temple around it. Once again it faced East (as we are looking in the picture), now toward the Jordan River and the Transjordan highlands and the Arabian desert beyond, with its back now toward the Mediterranean Sea. This was its final resting place.

[The picture is of Shiloh today (from [picasaweb.google.com](http://picasaweb.google.com)). The row of stones on the left outline the north wall of where the

Tabernacle would have been. ]

When worshippers approached the Tabernacle, they faced West. When they entered the door way, they would see, in front of them, the brazen altar where the animal bodies were burned. Then they would move around the altar toward their right. There, on the north side of the altar, they would slay the guilt offering. The priest would then take some blood from that animal *and sprinkle its blood around on the altar*.



## Leviticus 7:3-10 The Presentation of The Guilt Offering

After the animal was killed and some of its blood was sprinkled or poured around the altar, the worshiper would then do different things, depending on the animal he was sacrificing. But generally, he would cut the skin off. He would also take out the kidneys, the entrails, and the fat and wash

them. Finally, he would cut the carcass up into pieces. The priest, not the worshiper, would take each of these and lay them on the altar. The worshiper would then leave through the same and only door to the East, leaving the burning and disposing of the ashes to the priest.

Some parts of the sacrifice belonged to the priest and his male relatives. Specifically:

- *Every male among the priests may eat of it. It shall be eaten in a holy place; it is most holy. The guilt offering is like the sin offering, there is one law for them; the priest who makes atonement with it shall have it (7:6-7)*
- *Also the priest who presents any man's burnt offering, that priest shall have for himself the skin of the burnt offering which he has presented (7:8).*
- *Likewise, every grain offering that is baked in the oven and everything prepared in a pan or on a griddle shall belong to the priest who presents it. Every grain offering, mixed with oil or dry, shall belong to all the sons of Aaron, to all alike (7:9-10).*

## The Peace Offering

The peace offering is often called the fellowship offering (as discussed here in chapter 3) because it is offered for various reasons to maintain the worshipers' fellowship with God. The distinctive feature of the peace/fellowship offering was its accompanying communal meal. Many of the details of this meal are found only in Leviticus 7.

### Leviticus 7:11-18 Priestly Regulations about Presenting and Eating the Peace Offering

The peace offering could be brought for the following reasons:



- As an act of thanksgiving for something God has done – this had to be eaten the same day it was offered.
- In connection with a vow made to God – this could be eaten the day it was presented or the next day but not the third day.
- As a free-will voluntary gift to God – this, like the votive offering, could be eaten the day it was presented or the next day but not the third day.

[Picture from [www.wcg.org](http://www.wcg.org).]

### Leviticus 7:19-21 The Clean and the Unclean

When the Israelites entered the land, this became a meal which the whole community ate together.

Deuteronomy 12:10-12 reads:

*When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around you so that you live in security, then it shall come about that the place in which the LORD your God will choose for His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution of your hand, and all your choice votive offerings which you will vow to the LORD. And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion or inheritance with you.*

It is not clear if the meal in the wilderness was to be eaten only by the priest and his male descendents or the whole community. For sure, some sacrifices which could be eaten were only for the priests. But certain phrases like *As for other flesh, anyone who is clean may eat such flesh*

(Leviticus 7:19) sound like it could be eaten by more than just the priests. At any rate, the eating regulations of 7:19-21 included:

- *The flesh that touches anything unclean shall not be eaten; it shall be burned with fire.*
- *Anyone who ... eats ... in his uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from his people.*
- *Anyone touches anything unclean ... shall be cut off from his people.*

## **Leviticus 7:22-27 The Fat and the Blood**

### **The Fat**

Fat is first mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 4:4, in a figurative sense, where it is said that Abel offered the fat of the firstlings of his flock to the Lord. In this sense, “fat” was considered to be the best of the flock. “Fat” often referred simply to the best part of anything, such as *the fat of the land* (Genesis 45:18) and *the fat of the wheat* (Psalm 81:16).

The passages in Leviticus are not a figurative use of “fat” but the actual fat of sacrificed animals as belonging to the Lord, to be burned as an offering, which is a sweet savor to Him. The fatty portions specified in Leviticus are the fat of the entrails, the kidneys, the liver, and the tail of the sheep. Unlike the blood, the Israelites could eat other fat of animals slain solely for food (Deuteronomy 12:15-16, 21-24). So the eating of fat was not prohibited because it was injurious to health or any other social reason. It was to be devoted to God simply because He declared it to be so.

### **The Blood**

Non-sacrificial fat could be eaten, but no blood (sacrificial or not) could be eaten. Certain fat of certain animals was considered holy, but blood had a much higher degree of holiness than the fat because God said: ... *the life of the flesh is in the blood and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement* (Leviticus 17:11).

Because *the life of the flesh is in the blood*, blood was frequently use as a synonym for life itself, as with the blood of Abel (Genesis 4:10) and the command to Noah *you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.* (Genesis 9:4). In the Old Testament, “blood” occurs 362 times, 203 point to death by violence and 103 point to sacrificial blood. What is most interesting about the blood-eating prohibition is that it seems to extend through all generations and ages. Adam and Eve were to be vegetarians, Noah could eat meat but not blood. The Mosaic Law forbid the eating of blood. And the apostles and elders at the Jerusalem Council recorded in Acts 15 forbid the Gentile converts to eat blood. [The picture (from [moonlightmasquerade.blogspot.com](http://moonlightmasquerade.blogspot.com)) is a meal of blood sausage which would be biblically forbidden for both Jews and Christians.]



As with the eating of fat, no reason for the prohibition of eating blood is given. But speculation is easier here. Christ died on the cross, shedding His blood for the sins of the world. It would, therefore, be reasonable to assume that God would keep blood-eating a prohibition for all ages because Christ’s death paid for the sins of the people of all ages (1 John 2:2). Of course, it was the death of Christ, not just the blood of Christ, which paid for sins. For example, the blood He shed during the pre-crucifixion beatings did not pay for sin. But when He died, the shedding of blood did

pay for the sins of the world because His life was also in His blood. It would, therefore, make sense that God would set apart blood as a memorial of the death of Christ.

### Leviticus 7:28-38 Details and Emphasis

This last section of the chapter is a summary of the sacrifice process. There are a few details to note:

- The worshiper was not to appoint someone else, like a servant or child, to bring his offering. *His own hands are to bring offerings* (7:30).
- The breast and the right thigh were to be separated for the priest (7:31-32).
- These sacrificial practices are to be preformed *forever throughout their generations*.



#### THOUGHTS AND APPLICATIONS

- God definitely prescribed a liturgy for the people and the priests of Israel. But is that justification for a liturgy in the mass of the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Coptic or Anglican/ Episcopal churches today? An evangelical Anglican friend of mine justified his liturgy to me by saying: “The only time God spelled out a worship service was in the Mosaic Law, and that was a liturgy.” But that seem to me a bit short-sighted. The Levitical liturgy assumed the need for: a clergy/laity distinction, a sanctified place for having it in the land of Israel, and a blood sacrifice. Besides that, Jesus warned against having clerical titles (Matthew 23:8-10) and none are given for the church. Also, the gathering of the New Testament church is described with considerable detail, which Paul called *an orderly manner*. But it contains nothing like the high church Christian liturgies or the Mosaic sacrificial liturgy (1 Corinthians 14:26-40; Ephesians 5:19-20).
- The prohibitions against eating the fat are a classic example where the **purpose** of the passage does not determine its **meaning**. The purpose of the fat-eating prohibition is not clear. The meaning of the passage is, however, abundantly clear. They were not to eat the fat of these sacrificed animals. This is significant when it comes to interpreting commands. For example, many homosexuals suggest that the prohibitions against homosexuality can be ignored because the **purpose** was only to prohibit some sort of bad homosexuality. But the passages condemning homosexuality (like Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; and 1 Timothy 1:10) do not give a purpose, only a command. To assume a purpose, and ignore the command, is an unacceptable method of interpretation and application for any literature.
- It must be noted that these sacrifice practices are to be performed by the Israelites *forever throughout their generations* (Leviticus 7:36). This means that the Rabbinical/Synagogue Judaism, established by the Pharisees (originally called the Hasedians during the Babylonian captivity) and practiced since the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, is disobedience to Law of Moses. Because of their disobedience and the rejection of their Messiah, God has scattered the Jews all over the world (as He said He would). So they cannot follow the Law. But Rabbinical Judaism is not only being practiced by the Jews. There is a major movement in churches to use this disobedient form of Judaism to interpret the New Testament (for example, they say Jesus was a Rabbi, Rabbis taught children, therefore, Jesus’ disciples were all children). This has the effect of taking the Bible away from the people because they don’t know Rabbinical Judaism.