



The Quarry Gospel Church

BIBLE STUDY - 10.02.21

BIBLE STUDY - LEVITICUS - 3. THE MANUAL OF SACRIFICES - Part 3

- THE FELLOWSHIP or PEACE OFFERING

Leviticus 3 & 7:11-21

The third of the first 3 offerings brought out of love and devotion. Other names used for it were: "communion" or "shared" offering, or "offering of wellbeing".

General theme of the sacrifice - an invitation from the Lord to His people to present a voluntary offering that, unlike other sacrifices, can be used for a family feast to celebrate God's goodness, once a portion has been burned before the Lord.

1. THE PROCEDURES/RITUALS OF THE FELLOWSHIP OFFERING

A) The Animal

- From the herd or the flock, but no birds
- unlike burnt offering - male or female
- like burnt offering, must still be unblemished, without defect (only perfection acceptable to God)

B) The Ritual

- Animal presented at entrance to the tent of meeting
- Worshipper to lay hand on animal (ownership/substitute)
- As with previous sacrifices, worshipper involved in slaughter - *Leviticus 3:2,8,13*
- Priest sprinkled blood & put portion set aside for God on the fire
- Specific parts set aside for God - internal organs, kidneys, long lobe of liver & fat and, if a sheep, the complete "fat tail" - the whole tail (broad and fatty)
- Sacrifice to be put ON TOP of the Burnt Offering - it could not be brought on its own (it had no atonement element to it)

C) The Meal

Ch.3 - tells the worshipper how to perform the sacrifice

Ch.7 - adds further instructions for the priests and tells the worshipper how the feast of celebration should take place. (N.B. - focus is on sacrifice to God first and then the meal)

- Meat not totally consumed on the altar, but apart from God's portion is used for a celebratory meal, to which could be invited family, friends, any others and the priests.
- Consisted of meat AND bread - both unleavened AND leavened
- Unlike grain offering, not a "most holy" meal - so didn't have to be eaten in confines of tabernacle and was open to all.
- Meat must be eaten on 1st, or possible 2nd day. 3rd day or after - it would be considered "unclean"

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE OFFERING

It was used in individual and public/collective worship and was used both at the high points and low points of Israel's history.

A) To express thankfulness - the foremost/common reason for this offering

see *Deuteronomy 12:7; Psalm 100:4-5; Psalm 105:1; Psalm 106:1*

- The "memorial" portion is laid on the altar and burned - belongs to God - a token of the whole
- Israel were able to show thanks not just in words but in action too.

B) To confirm a vow - *Leviticus 7:16*

- God takes us at our word - words and vows matter to God!
Psalm 15:1-2; Ecclesiastes 5:1-2,4-7;
- New Testament - *Matthew 5:33-37* - For the Christian - it is enough that your "yes" to be "yes" and your "no" to be "no"
- This sacrifice ensures that the worshipper has considered the seriousness of making a vow.

C) To profess one's love

- It could be a "freewill" offering
- It was a way of answering *Psalm 116:12* - "*How can I repay the Lord for all His goodness to me*"
- This offering could be general thanksgiving or thanksgiving for a specific blessing - an outpouring of the worshipper's love for God

D) To strengthen one's communion with God

- The host of the celebratory meal was God, not the worshipper. It was God that had invited the Israelites to worship in this way - He provided them with the opportunity to have firstly communion with Him, but then with each other in a meal where they could enjoy and celebrate God's favour together
- It was for the benefit of God's people - God is not needy - *Psalm 50:9-12*
- The meal speaks of the bounty Israel has received at God's right hand - whilst they keep their covenant with Him, He has promised to bless them

3. THE MEANING OF THIS OFFERING - IT'S APPLICATION FOR US

This offering is referred to in the New Testament and applied afresh to the Christians today:

A) It speaks of community

- O.T. - The communal feasting was a picture of Israel living in harmony with one another, celebrating God's goodness and providing for the poor among them
- N.T. - *Acts 2:42-47* fulfils the design of the fellowship offering - a picture of how the church should be

B) It speaks of Communion (the Lord's Supper)

- *1 Corinthians 11* - Paul's instructions for Communion have specific reference to *Leviticus 3*.

Fellowship Offering:

- celebrates God's Covenant forged on Mount Sinai
- required the worshipper to be in a state of ritual purity

Communion:

- celebrates the New Covenant forged on Golgotha
- the Christian is required to be in a state of personal purity

One difference:

- required "NOT" to drink the blood
 - required to partake of the blood
- Both meals required that the poor were invited and fed - Paul rebuked the Corinthians for allowing the poor to go without food!

D) It speaks of the future

Israel saw a picture of a "Future Banquet" in God's presence - THEIR GREAT HOPE in all their darkest moments - *Isaiah 25:6*

Matthew 22 - Jesus uses the same imagery of the Wedding Banquet

The main difference between these two pictures:

In the Old Testament, Leviticus demanded ritual purity and cleanliness on the part of the worshipper - something the Pharisees focused upon.

BUT - the Wedding Feast of the Lamb does not need to demand that of the guests -

Jesus' sacrifice has made them clean and qualified them for the meal

THIS IS OUR HOPE!

4. FINAL THOUGHT

The Fellowship Offering was always performed last - it was brought after all the other offerings, bringing the worshippers to a place where they could bask in God's presence and celebrate His goodness.