

LEVITICUS 3

Fellowship with a Holy God

The Peace Offering (3)

Why a variety of sacrifices? In the New Testament, the one sacrifice of Christ fulfills all of the Old Testament sacrifices (Heb. 9:25–28), which by themselves could not really save anyone (10:1, 4). So why was it necessary for the Israelites to offer a variety of sacrifices? The answer lies in the fact that no single kind of animal sacrifice could express even the basic aspects of provision for reconciliation with God. For example, how can a victim that is wholly consumed (burnt offering) also allow the offerer to partake of it (well-being offering)? These are mutually exclusive in physical terms, like having your cake and eating it too.¹

We are now at the third kind of offering. Each of the offerings we are studying illustrate graphically for us some aspects of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the benefits that come to us because of His death and resurrection. No one sacrifice could be adequate to show us all that has been done for us.

This third sacrifice, which probably was offered immediately after the Burnt Offering and the Grain Offering is called the Peace Offering, *selamim qorban*. Other translations call it the Fellowship or Well-being offering.

1. What can you learn about the meaning of *peace* from the following verses:?

The word *PEACE* is from *Shalom*, but it means much more than just the absence of conflict.

15:15 – talks about Abraham dying in peace.

28:21 – Jacob uses the term to describe his safe (peace) return to the land.

37:14 – Jacob sends Joseph to see how your brothers and flocks are “getting along” (peace). This is a use of *shalom* as “well-being.”

43:28 – Joseph inquires if his father is *shalom* (well).

One great thing about the PEACE OFFERING is that the Lord is concerned about Israel’s WELL-BEING and all those who are in covenant relationship with Him.

The translation “well-being” (NIPS; NRSV) comes from the idea of *šalem* (“whole/sound”), reflecting the fact that this sacrifice is offered for happy circumstances (see below). At the same time, “well-being” is not far removed from *šalom* (“peace”), which is more than absence of conflict. For example, Jacob told Joseph: “Go and see if all is well with [lit., ‘see the *šalom* of’] your brothers and with [lit., ‘the *šalom* of’] the flocks, and bring word back to me” (Gen. 37:14).²

¹ Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, The NIV Application Commentary, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 90–91.

² Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, The NIV Application Commentary, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 87.

The word “peace” indicates not only an absence of war but also a state of completeness, soundness, and welfare. This offering did not *make* peace with God; instead it expressed the fact that the worshipper was *already* at peace with God. Thus peace exists when this offering is brought.³

The fellowship offering was not presented until the burnt offering had been made. In order for anyone to have fellowship with God, an atoning sacrifice on behalf of the sinner must be made.⁴

Christians tend to think of the Israelite sacrifices primarily or even exclusively in terms of atonement for sin, but 7:12–16 teaches us that sacrifices could be performed on an array of joyful occasions.⁵

It is like our celebrations of special events with a Bar-B-Que or a Crawfish Boil or a Thanksgiving Turkey or a Christmas Ham.

The fellowship offering was prescribed on three specific occasions: the Feast of Weeks (23:19, 20), the completion of the Nazirite vow (Num 6:17–20), and the installation of the priests (Lev 9:18, 22)⁶

The peace offering was also given after successful military campaigns (1 Sam. 11:15), cessation of famine or pestilence (2 Sam. 24:25), at times of spiritual renewal (2 Chron. 29:31–36), and in the dedication of the tabernacle (Lev. 9:4, 18, 22) and the temple (1 Kings 8:63–64)⁷

No matter how rich or poor our outward circumstances, there is *always* a reason to rejoice. At the very least, we have the rich hope of a better, eternal life through Christ’s sacrifice. If this doesn’t evoke thankfulness, praise, and spontaneous outbursts of devotion, what could?⁸

The fellowship offering was not presented until the burnt offering had been made. In order for anyone to have fellowship with God, an atoning sacrifice on behalf of the sinner must be made.⁹

1. How is this offering different from the burnt offerings?

3:1-5 with 1:3-9

3:6-11 and 3:12-16 with 1:10-13

HERD ANIMAL (3:1-5)

¹If you present an animal from the herd as a peace offering to the LORD, it may be a male or a female, but it must have no defects.

²Lay your hand on the animal’s head, and slaughter it at the entrance of the Tabernacle. Then Aaron’s sons, the priests, will splatter its blood against all sides of the altar.

³ Jerry M. Hullinger, “The Function of the Millennial Sacrifices in Ezekiel’s Temple, Part 2,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 167 (2010): 166–167.

⁴ Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, The New American Commentary, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 3A:105.

⁵ Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, The NIV Application Commentary, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 89.

⁶ Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, The New American Commentary, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 3A:100.

⁷ Jerry M. Hullinger, “The Function of the Millennial Sacrifices in Ezekiel’s Temple, Part 2,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 167 (2010): 167.

⁸ Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, The NIV Application Commentary, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 93.

⁹ Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, The New American Commentary, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 3A:105.

³The priest must present part of this peace offering as a special gift to the LORD. This includes all the fat around the internal organs, ⁴the two kidneys and the fat around them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver. These must be removed with the kidneys, ⁵and Aaron's sons will burn them on top of the burnt offering on the wood burning on the altar.

It is a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

FLOCK (3:6-11, 12-16)

⁶"If you present an animal from the flock as a peace offering to the LORD, it may be a male or a female, but it must have no defects.

⁷If you present a sheep as your offering, bring it to the LORD, ⁸lay your hand on its head, and slaughter it in front of the Tabernacle.

Aaron's sons will then splatter the sheep's blood against all sides of the altar. ⁹The priest must present the fat of this peace offering as a special gift to the LORD. This includes the fat of the broad tail cut off near the backbone, all the fat around the internal organs, ¹⁰the two kidneys and the fat around them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver. These must be removed with the kidneys, ¹¹and the priest will burn them on the altar.

It is a special gift of food presented to the LORD.

¹²"If you present a goat as your offering, bring it to the LORD, ¹³lay your hand on its head, and slaughter it in front of the Tabernacle.

Aaron's sons will then splatter the goat's blood against all sides of the altar. ¹⁴The priest must present part of this offering as a special gift to the LORD. This includes all the fat around the internal organs, ¹⁵the two kidneys and the fat around them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver. These must be removed with the kidneys, ¹⁶and the priest will burn them on the altar.

It is a special gift of food, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

All the fat belongs to the LORD.

1. Do you think the laying hands on the animal's head means the same (1:4; 3:2, 8, 13)? Why or why not?

Since the sacrifice does not specifically bring atonement the meaning is different. In the wholly burnt offering, the worshipper is identifying with the animal's death on his behalf. The Peace Offering recognizes that atonement has taken place and the identification is with God's ownership of the offering and the offerer.

- How is this offering different from the burnt offerings? 3:1-5 with 1:3-9; 3:6-11 and 3:12-16 with 1:10-13

Herd Animals	Peace	Flock Animals	Peace
Male w/o defects	Male or Female	Male w/o defects	Male or Female
Entrance	Yes		Yes
Lay Hands on Head	Yes	?	Yes
Slaughter		Slaughter on North Side	
Priest Splatters Blood	Yes	Priest Splatters Blood	Yes
Skinned & Cut into Pieces	Skinned (not stated) Entrail Fat, Kidneys, Liver	Cut into Pieces	Entrail Fat, Kidneys, Liver Sheep – Fat Tail
Head & Fat Included	Head No Fat Included	Head & Fat Included	Head No Fat Included
Burn on Wood Fire	Specified Parts Burnt	Burn on Wood Fire	Specified Parts Burnt
Wash with Water		Wash with Water	
Entire Sacrifice Burned	Priest's Share Worshipper Gets Rest	Entire Sacrifice Burned	Priest's Share Worshipper Gets Rest

- Do you think the laying hands on the animal's head means the same (1:4; 3:2, 8, 13)? Why or why not?

No, in the wholly burnt offering, the worshipper was identifying in the animal's death as atonement. In the peace offering, he was identifying that he was giving this animal to God because they were at peace. No other atoning purpose is mentioned. The sacrifice changed hands from the man to God. It would be God's decision as to how it was disposed of.

- **Why must the animal have no defects (3:1; 22:17-25)?**

Just as we would not want defective food served to us, we recognize that giving an animal that is perfect is giving God our best in recognition that He gives us His best. It would be disrespectful to do otherwise.

So there is a three-way distribution of the body of the animal among the Lord, the priests, and the offerer.

Since other sacrifices of which edible portions may be eaten—grain, purification, and reparation offerings—are “most holy” (2:3, 10; 6:17, 25, 29; 7:1, 6; Num. 18:9), they can only be eaten by consecrated priests (2:3, 10, etc.). The lesser sanctity of “holy” well-being offerings makes their meat accessible to laity.¹⁰

Why the difference in preparation from the burnt offering, the fat, two kidneys, long lobe of liver?

Since the entire offering is not to be burned, the choice parts are to be given to him.

FAT & BLOOD PROHIBITED (3:17)

¹⁷“You must never eat any fat or blood. This is a permanent law for you, and it must be observed from generation to generation, wherever you live.”

- **Why do you think there is a restriction on fat and blood (3:17; 17:10-14)?**

The fat portions are the choice pieces. It is a mark of giving our best to God! The priest gets the right thigh as his portion. The rest of the meat is for the worshipper to use in celebration. The blood is restricted because it is the life of the animal (Leviticus 17:14).

- **How lasting was this restriction (3:17)?**

It was an eternal restriction on those under the covenant. Each generation would have to follow this Law.

- **What do you infer from this sacrifice about our relationship with God?**

It should change our view of God and our relationship of PEACE with Him in the covenant. We are not under the Law, but in the New Covenant established with Christ's blood. This means that God is concerned with our welfare. He is orchestrating the *shalom* in our lives. All that we receive, good or bad, comes from Him with a loving purpose (*Romans 8:28*).

The offerer's portion is sacrificial meat from an animal that has been dedicated to God. It is a sacred meal that continues a ritual, unlike eating a steak purchased at Safeway or a hamburger from McDonald's. So the Lord's ritual rules follow the food out of the sacred precincts to govern some aspects of its consumption.

¹⁰ Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, The NIV Application Commentary, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 88.

(1) It must be eaten by the second day (7:16) or on the first day if it is a thanksgiving offering (7:15).

(2) Because the meat is holy and therefore must not be brought into contact with ritual impurity, the offerer must be ritually pure in order to eat it (7:19–21).¹¹

What is unique about the blood?

Coupled with this prohibition of eating the fat in v. 17 is the prohibition of eating the blood. The mention of eating the blood is raised here because as was noted above this is the only sacrifice where the individual Israelite could participate by eating a portion of the offering. This prohibition is unqualified. Thus it is added to the prohibition of eating the fat although the subject of eating of blood has not been raised in Leviticus 3. The definitive statement prohibiting the partaking of blood is given in Lev 17:10–12, where blood is equated with life. Since life is a gift of God, blood, the unique manifestation of this gift, must not be eaten but given back to God, the source of life. The burning of the fat and the sprinkling of blood against the altar signified the giving of the life of the animal back to God upon its death.¹²

Why no fat?

The fat represented the best part of the sacrifice to be reserved for the Lord; they offered the fattest.¹³

Although the term “fellowship offering” does not occur in the New Testament, the distinctive feature of this offering, the eating of the festive meal in communion with God, does resemble the practice of the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. In Leviticus the worshiper is God’s invited guest to enjoy the festive meal. Similarly, in the Lord’s Supper the believer is invited to feast regularly upon the blood and body of the lamb of God.¹³⁵ The participant is only warned to be clean in order to participate (Lev 7:20; 1 Cor 11:27).¹⁴

ADDITIONAL HELP ON THE PASSAGE

3:1 Peace is from a Hebrew root word from which we get the word *shalom*. The root *salem* means more than just ‘peace.’ Peace involves well-being (Genesis 37:14 – ‘see how your brothers are getting along’). Here it is the plural word *selamim*.

Peace Offering - This sacrifice could be given voluntarily at any time, but was mandated on certain occasions such as the Feast of Weeks (23:19-20) and when a Nazirite vow was completed (Numbers 6:17-20). The peace offering was also given after successful military campaigns (1 Sam. 11:15), cessation of famine or pestilence (2 Sam. 24:25), at times of spiritual renewal (2 Chron. 29:31–36), and in the dedication of the tabernacle (Lev. 9:4, 18, 22) and the temple (1 Kings 8:63–64).¹⁵

This offering is both *corban*, an offering, and *zabah*, a sacrifice. *Zabah* is used mostly of killing animals for sacrifice and refers to bringing the animal for that purpose. The word used in verse two for *slaughter* (*sehat*).

¹¹ Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, The NIV Application Commentary, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 88.

¹² Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, The New American Commentary, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 3A:104–105.

¹³ Michael Barrett, “The Danger of Heartless Religion: An Exposition of Isaiah 1:2–18,” *Puritan Reformed Journal* 6, no. 2 (2014): 12.

¹⁴ Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, The New American Commentary, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 3A:105.

¹⁵ Jerry M. Hullinger, “The Function of the Millennial Sacrifices in Ezekiel’s Temple, Part 2,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 167 (2010): 167.

Male or Female this marks a change since only males could be offered for atonement. I think that this was a reminder of the Son who was to come to make atonement. Because of that all would be acceptable.

No Defects the common defects were animals which were blind, disabled, mutilated, or sick (*Leviticus 22:21-22*).

3:2 Lay your hand was the way for the worshipper to identifying himself with the sacrifice. In this case it is a reminder that through the burnt offering, peace exists between the Lord and himself. This was not always the actual case

3:3 Special gift translates the word for *fire* and thus means an offering burnt up by fire as the select portions of this sacrifice were.

3:9 Broad tail cut off near the backbone was common in the type of sheep that they raised and would not have been true of the goats.

Two kidneys and the fat ... the long lobe of the liver probably given because of the fat which was around them made them the choicest parts of the animals. The long lobe is a feature found in these animals that does not occur in humans.

3:16 All the fat belongs to the Lord the fat was considered the best part of these animals, in a sense, "choice."

3:17 Permanent law literally implies *engraved forever*. We would use the phrase, "*this is set in stone*." They were never to eat the fat or any of the blood of the animal.

Well-being [Peace] Offering (7:11-36)

There is more information presented about this sacrifice in chapter 7, which is instructions for the priests.

INTRODUCTION (7:11)

¹¹ "These are the instructions regarding the different kinds of peace offerings that may be presented to the LORD.

THANKSGIVING, VOTIVE, AND FREEWILL OFFERINGS (7:12-21)

¹² If you present your peace offering as an expression of thanksgiving, the usual animal sacrifice must be accompanied by various kinds of bread made without yeast—thin cakes mixed with olive oil, wafers spread with oil, and cakes made of choice flour mixed with olive oil. ¹³ This peace offering of thanksgiving must also be accompanied by loaves of bread made with yeast. ¹⁴ One of each kind of bread must be presented as a gift to the LORD. It will then belong to the priest who splatters the blood of the peace offering against the altar. ¹⁵ The meat of the peace offering of thanksgiving must be eaten on the same day it is offered. None of it may be saved for the next morning.

¹⁶ "If you bring an offering to fulfill a vow or as a voluntary offering, the meat must be eaten on the same day the sacrifice is offered, but whatever is left over may be eaten on the second day. ¹⁷ Any meat left over until the third day must be completely burned up. ¹⁸ If any of the meat from the peace offering is eaten on the third day, the person who presented it will not be accepted by the LORD. You will receive no credit for offering it. By then the meat will be contaminated; if you eat it, you will be punished for your sin.

¹⁹ "Meat that touches anything ceremonially unclean may not be eaten; it must be completely burned up. The rest of the meat may be eaten, but only by people who are ceremonially clean. ²⁰ If you are ceremonially unclean and you eat meat from a peace offering that was presented to the LORD, you will be cut off from the community.

²¹ If you touch anything that is unclean (whether it is human defilement or an unclean animal or any other unclean, detestable thing) and then eat meat from a peace offering presented to the LORD, you will be cut off from the community."

THE FORBIDDEN BLOOD AND FAT (7:22-27)

²² Then the LORD said to Moses,

²³ "Give the following instructions to the people of Israel. You must never eat fat, whether from cattle, sheep, or goats. ²⁴ The fat of an animal found dead or torn to pieces by wild animals must never be eaten, though it may

be used for any other purpose. ²⁵ Anyone who eats fat from an animal presented as a special gift to the LORD will be cut off from the community. ²⁶ No matter where you live, you must never consume the blood of any bird or animal. ²⁷ Anyone who consumes blood will be cut off from the community.”

A PORTION FOR THE PRIESTS (7:28-36)

²⁸ Then the LORD said to Moses,

²⁹ “Give the following instructions to the people of Israel. When you present a peace offering to the LORD, bring part of it as a gift to the LORD. ³⁰ Present it to the LORD with your own hands as a special gift to the LORD. Bring the fat of the animal, together with the breast, and lift up the breast as a special offering to the LORD. ³¹ Then the priest will burn the fat on the altar, but the breast will belong to Aaron and his descendants. ³² Give the right thigh of your peace offering to the priest as a gift. ³³ The right thigh must always be given to the priest who offers the blood and the fat of the peace offering. ³⁴ For I have reserved the breast of the special offering and the right thigh of the sacred offering for the priests. It is the permanent right of Aaron and his descendants to share in the peace offerings brought by the people of Israel. ³⁵ This is their rightful share. The special gifts presented to the LORD have been reserved for Aaron and his descendants from the time they were set apart to serve the LORD as priests. ³⁶ On the day they were anointed, the LORD commanded the Israelites to give these portions to the priests as their permanent share from generation to generation.”

ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY QUOTES

The *distinctiveness* of the fellowship offering was in the communal meal which the worshiper and his family ate before the Lord (cf. 7:15). It was essentially a voluntary act in which the worshiper accepted the meat from God as a token of His covenant faithfulness and gave God acknowledgment or thankful praise for His past blessings bestowed, whether in answer to prayer, or granted unexpectedly, or the normal blessings such as a good harvest.

The *typology* of the fellowship offering pictures the fellowship that the New Testament believer has with God and with other believers on the basis of Christ’s death on the cross (1 John 1:3). This is one phase of Christ’s “making peace through His blood, shed on the cross” (Col. 1:20). In fact, “He Himself is our peace” (Eph. 2:14).¹⁶

¹⁶ F. Duane Lindsey, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, 1985, 1, 179–180.