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Leviticus 3

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Leviticus 3.

FOCUS: PEACE OFFERING

Topics.

- The sacrifice of peace offering.
 - The fat, the entrails, the two kidneys, the loins and the long lobe of the liver.
 - A peace offering is to be burnt as pleasing aroma to the LORD.
 - A lamb offered as peace offering before the LORD.
 - A goat offered as peace offering before the LORD.
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INTRODUCTION: the book of Leviticus is about ceremonial rules and civil laws that God gave to Moses after He had given him the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.

- These are the statutes and rules and laws that the LORD made between him and the people of Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai. (Lev. 26:46).

Either on Mount Sinai or when he met with him in the Tabernacle (also called the tent of meeting) when they were in the wilderness near the Mountain. Moses was to give these ceremonial laws to the Levitical priesthood, they embrace rules concerning sacrifices, offerings and worship; the ordination of Aaron and his sons and their ceremonial cleanness; the Day of Atonement; feasts and holy days and the Year of Jubilee. The civil and social laws and laws of justice he was to give to the government of Israel to implement within their society. The ceremonial and civil laws were not given to the secular world but are laws God gave to the nation of Israel. The central message is that God is holy and requires His people to be holy. The book also shows that God graciously provides atonement for sin through the shedding of blood. Most Jews and Christians recognise Moses as the author, writing sometime after the giving of the Law (about 1445 B.C.).

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

The previous chapter: covers laws regarding grain offerings cooked in an oven, griddle and pan; the portion presented to the LORD; why no leaven or honey was to be added to food offering given to the LORD and the importance of salt being put on burnt offerings.

LEVITICUS 3:1-2

The Sacrifice of Peace Offering.

- **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. ²And 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.

These verses teach the following three things concerning the peace offering:

1. The animal was to be a male or female without blemish from their own herd.
2. The person offering the animal was to lay their hand on the head of their offering and kill it at the entrance of the tent of meeting before the LORD.
3. Aaron's sons the priests were then to throw the blood against the sides of the altar.

LEVITICUS 3:3-4

The Fat, Entrails, Two Kidneys, Loins and Long Lobe of the Liver.

- **Leviticus 3:3-4:** 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, ⁴and 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.

From these verses we learn that this offering was to be a food offering to the LORD and that the person offering the animal was to offer:

- All the fat that was on the entrails (innards) and that covered them.
- The two kidneys with all the fat that was on them.
- The two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins.
- The long lobe of the liver with the kidneys.

Fat and its symbolism: in many verses God says that "the fat is mine," and that whoever eats it will be cut off from their people. This does not mean that we cannot eat any fat at all since that would mean we could never eat meat, because every piece of meat, even lean meat has some fat in it. When we look at the context that these words are spoken in we see that the focus is upon the fat that covers the innards and intestines (i.e., the entrails), specifically the fat above the kidneys and the fatty mass surrounding the liver, this is consistent throughout the Bible. The fat contained in the muscular meat of the animal is not mentioned, nor is the fat of chickens or fish mentioned anywhere in the Scriptures, but only the fat of bulls, oxen, sheep and goats, and then only the fat that surrounds the intestines.

The symbolism: fat is used by the body to store excess energy, for this reason it symbolically speaks of abundance. As God blessed a righteous person or nation, they accumulate excess, this excess in the Bible is called increase and symbolically fat. The fat given to God was from the inner most parts of the animal, signifying that we are to give the inner most part of our lives, the part that others cannot see to God in love, praise and worship.

A food offering to the LORD: this is a common expression throughout Leviticus, following are three reasons they are called, food offerings to the LORD:

1. Generally, all offerings that became food for the Levitical priesthood, are called, "the LORD'S food offerings," because the priests stand before the LORD on behalf of the people and the offerings became food for the priests who were God's representatives on earth (sacrifices whose blood was taken into the temple were the exception to this rule, these sacrifices could not be eaten).
2. Specifically, it refers to the memorial portion that was offered to the LORD on the altar of burnt offerings in the outer court that was utterly consumed by the fire, symbolizing the priests sharing the meal with God.

3. The Old Testament sacrificial system pointed to the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God who gave himself as a pleasing sacrifice to his heavenly Father on behalf of sinners.
 - He who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him. (John 8:29).

Though animal and grain sacrifices have been abolished today, we should continue to offer the sacrifice of our time, finances, labour and helps.

The LORD'S memorial portion: if an animal (female or male) from the herd, (i.e., a bull, ram goat or lamb), is offered for a peace offering (Lev. 3:1-2) the memorial portion that is offered as a food offering to the LORD is: all the fat that covers the entrails (i.e., innards); the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins, and the kidneys with the long lobe of the liver. (Lev. 3:3-4).

Food offerings to the LORD: for those who do not understand the health benefits surrounding the food offerings and the prophetic symbolism of the sacrifices that foreshadow the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, the concept of sacrifices seems strange, because they had no power to cleanse anything. The author of Hebrews states:

- On the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness ¹⁹(for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God. (Heb. 7:18-19).

And he goes on to say:

- For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. ²Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sin? ³But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin every year. ⁴For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (Heb. 10:1-4).

The reason they did not need to cleanse, but acted as a reminders was because Israel did not need to do anything to be saved, for they became God's chosen people when they entered-into the covenant with the LORD at Mount Sinai, but they did need to maintain their salvation, by remaining obedient to God's statutes and faithful to His laws laid out in the covenant, which includes all the laws stated in the book of Leviticus and everywhere else. The purpose of the sin sacrifices was to remind Israel of the seriousness of sin, the importance of remaining obedient and faithful to the LORD and that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (Heb. 9:22). Old Testament Israel offered animal sacrifices to God, but they were not saved by them, they were a type and shadow of Christ the Lamb of God without blemish, they signified the Saviours' sacrifice (i.e., the innocent for the guilty). It was not the blood of bulls and goats that cleansed them (Heb. 10:4), but Jesus blood. This is because the power of Christ's cleansing blood flows back to the foundation of the earth so that the faithful of the Old and New Testament are saved by the same Saviour and the same Redeemer. In the book of Revelation, it is written:

- All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8).

Here we read that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world and the following verse shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that Jesus was not only the central focus of God's eternal mind and of His eternal plans and purposes for mankind's salvation and for eternity, before time began, but also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world:

- You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot foreordained before the foundation of the world and manifest in these last times for you. (1 Peter 1:18-20).

The cleansing power of Jesus blood shed on the cross of Calvary doesn't just cover and cleanse only those who have come to the Lord after his death and resurrection, but flows all the way back to the foundations of the earth to Adam and Eve like a spiritual river cleansing all the faithful of the Old Testament from the fall of Adam onward who by faith looked to the coming and the appearing of the promised Messiah the Christ. All sacrifices honored the LORD and found their fullness in the Lord Jesus Christ, both in the Old Testament as well as today and any other future time. Food offerings (also called meal offerings or meat offerings) apply to all animal sacrifices and offerings that were accompanied with a grain offering.

God's dietary laws: based on the following verse many, claim that we should only eat plant food.

- God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. (Genesis 1:29).

Here God gave Adam and Eve instruction to eat liberally from the plant foods lavishly provided in the Garden of Eden. However, after humanity's exodus from the Garden of Eden, the proteins unique to animal foods became increasingly important to a race now dependent on heavy labour, speed, and physical strength to survive. The book of Leviticus chapter eleven and Deuteronomy chapter fourteen show that God approved of mankind eating animal protein sources. Abraham, Moses, Jacob and Jesus ate biblically clean meats. Today we aren't in the Garden of Eden, so we all need animal protein. Following are the animals, birds and fish listed in Leviticus eleven and Deuteronomy fourteen that may be eaten:

1. The meat of animals with a cloven or split hoof that also chew the cud (Lev. 11:3). This includes cows, goats, sheep, oxen, deer, buffalo, and so forth.
2. Birds that live primarily on insects, grubs or grains.
3. Any fish with fins and scales. (Lev. 11:9-19).

Following are the animals, birds and fish listed in the same chapters that may not be eaten:

1. Animals that chew the cud but do not have cloven or split hooves (Lev. 4), such as pigs, camels, horses, rats, skunks, dogs, cats, squirrels, and possums. (The list is not limited to these).
2. Birds and fowls that eat flesh.
3. Smooth skinned fish and water creatures without fins and scales such as catfish, eels, and hard-shelled crustaceans such as crab, lobster or clams. (Leviticus 11:9-19).

LEVITICUS 3:5

A Peace Offering is to be Burnt as Pleasing Aroma to the LORD.

Leviticus 3:5: Then Aaron's sons shall burn it (All the fat, the entrails, the two kidneys, the loins and the long lobe of the liver) 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.

The words, "burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering," does not refer to the animal offered for a peace offering for that became food for the priests as the following shows:

- The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten on the day of his offering. He shall not leave any of it until the morning. (Lev. 7:15-16).

Rather the command to burn all the fat, the entrails, the two kidneys, the loins and the long lobe of the liver on the altar on top of the burnt offering, means burn it on top of the daily morning and evening sacrifice of the lamb which was continually burning the whole day and always had priority over all other offerings.

- The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not go out. The priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and he shall arrange the burnt offering (the morning and evening offering) on it and shall burn on it the fat of the peace offerings. (Lev. 6:12)

The daily morning and evening burnt offering was always the first to be offered, and after it all other sacrifices and offerings. The morning and evening offering did not cease, on feast days or Sabbaths, because other sacrifices were offered.

- Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs a year-old day by day regularly.
³⁹One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. (Exod. 29:38-39).

This morning and evening sacrifice of the lamb was a ritual that took place every day, regardless of what other offerings and sacrifices were to be offered on any given day. The following verse shows that the fat (embracing the innards and entrails) of the peace offering was to be burnt on top of the lamb of the morning and evening offering.

- The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not go out. The priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and he shall arrange the burnt offering (the morning and evening offering) on it and shall burn on it the fat of the peace offerings. (Lev 6:12).

The words, "burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering," is better understood if it is expressed in the following manner, "burn it (the fat and entrails) on the altar on top of the morning and evening burnt offering, that is already burning on the altar. The morning and evening sacrifice offered daily was the first sacrifice to be offered, for it signified the sacrifice of Christ, which makes daily atonement for all who by faith receive him, without such atonement no peace with God could be obtained, nor could a peace-offering be accepted.

The lamb offered daily symbolizes Jesus, who loved us and gave himself up for us, as fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Ephes. 5:2), while the fat and inward parts laid on top of the lamb of the daily sacrifice that ascends to God as a sweet aroma signifies faithful believers offering up their heart to the Lord Jesus Christ and making him King and Saviour of their most inward parts. The giving of LORD'S memorial portion was an act of obedience and faith, this is one of the reasons it is referred to as a pleasing aroma to the LORD, for it is only by faith that we please the LORD. David prayed:

- I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. ³¹This will please the LORD more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs. (Psalm 69:30-31).

The thought underlying this prayer of David's is that a heart that is devoted to God and filled with gratitude will by far surpass the offering of bulls and goats if they are only being offered from a sense of duty and tradition. A Christian who does not attend church every week, but has a heart filled with love and gratitude toward the Lord, by far surpasses the worth of those whose heart is far from the Lord, but strictly attend church every week from a sense of duty and tradition. Since we do not offer animal and grain sacrifices to the LORD today, it could now be rightly said that the memorial portion offered up to the LORD, is that portion of the heart that is solely given to Christ in love, praise and gratitude.

LEVITICUS 3:6-11

A Lamb Offered as Peace Offering Before the LORD.

- **Leviticus 3:6-11:** "If his offering for a sacrifice of peace offering to the LORD is an animal from the flock, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish. ⁷If he offers a lamb for his offering, then he shall offer it before the LORD, ⁸lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it in front of the tent of meeting; and Aaron's sons shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar. ⁹Then 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 (the whole rump in KJV), cut off close to the backbone, and the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails ¹⁰and 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. ¹¹And the priest shall burn it on the altar as a food offering to the LORD.

From these verses we learn that the male or female animal to be offered was to be without blemish from the persons own flock, and if it was a lamb it was to be offered before the LORD. The person offering the lamb was to lay their hand on the animals' head and kill it on the altar in the front of the tent of meeting. The priests were to throw the lambs blood against the sides of the altar in the outer court and then to:

- Cut the whole tail of fat off close to the backbone.
- Cut off all the fat that was on the entrails and that covered them.
- Cut off the two kidneys at the lions with the fat that is on them.
- Remove the long lobe of the liver with the kidneys.
- Burn the peace offering as a food offering to the LORD.

He shall remove the whole fat tail (the whole rump in KJV): (v9) this is better stated, the whole fat tail. The fat-tailed sheep is a general type of domestic sheep known for their distinctive large tails and hindquarters. Fat-tailed sheep breeds comprise approximately 25% of the world sheep population, and are commonly found in northern parts of Africa, the Middle East, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, North India, Western China, Somalia and Central Asia. They are hardy, adaptable, and able to withstand the tough challenges of desert life and probably formed a large portion in the flocks of the Israelites. Two general varieties of fat-tails exist, the broad fat-tails and the long fat-tails. The tail of the long-tailed sheep grows so large that it drags on the ground and hinders copulation. Their very large and fat tails weighed (around 6kg) (15 lbs.) and even as much as 22kg (50 lbs.), when the sheep was increased by artificial fattening. It is often so large (around four feet in length) that it trails on the ground, to save the animal from the pain of having its tail drag on the ground, a small wheeled wagon is attached to its tail. Today women make rugs and blankets from its wool and use the fat of its tail in candles and soaps and other cottage-type industries and the fat and marrow of the tail of young animals is considered a delicacy and used for cooking, though there has been a decline, since other types of fats and oils have increased in popularity.

He shall remove the two kidneys with the fat and the long lobe of the liver: (v9) only the inner parts of the sacrificed animal were burnt, the shoulder and breast were the priests, and the rest of the animal was given to the priest that offered the animal.

LEVITICUS 3:12-17

A Goat Offered as Peace Offering Before the LORD.

- **Leviticus 3:12-17:** "If his offering is a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD ¹³and lay his hand on its head and kill it in front of the tent of meeting, and the sons of Aaron shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar. ¹⁴Then he shall offer from it, as his offering for a food offering to the LORD, the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails ¹⁵and 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. ¹⁶And the priest shall burn them on the altar as a food offering with a pleasing aroma. All fat is the LORD's. ¹⁷It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, in all your dwelling places, that you eat neither fat nor blood."

From these verses we learn that the person offering the goat, was to offer it before the LORD and lay their hand upon its head and kill it in front of the tent of meeting and offer it as a food offering to the LORD. The priests were to:

- Throw the blood of the goat against the sides of the altar.
- Cut off all the fat that was on the entrails and that covered them.
- Cut off the two kidneys with all the fat that was on them.
- Cut off the loins.
- Cut off the long lobe of the liver with the kidneys.
- Burn the sacrificed goat on the altar as a food offering and pleasing aroma to the LORD.

All fat is the LORD's: (v16) refers to the fat pieces of the ox the ram, the fat tail and that which covers the entrails and the kidneys and the long lobe of the liver (Lev. 9:19), which have previously been mentioned (Lev. 3:3). It embraces the fat of the inwards, the suet (i.e., the hard-white fat on the kidneys and loins of cattle and sheep). The fat in focus here is limited to the fat on the entrails, the two kidneys and the long lobe of the liver (Lev. 3:14-15), that was required to be offered to the LORD. This fat was easily separated from the flesh, in contrast to the fat that is mixed with the meat, which they could eat as the following verses show.

The LORD gave Israel the fat of lambs, rams and goats to eat:

- Curds from the herd, and milk from the flock, with fat of lambs, rams of Bashan and goats, with the very finest of the wheat—and you (Jacob and by extension Israel) drank foaming wine made from the blood of the grape. (Deut. 32:14).

After hearing all the words of the LORD Israel wept, Nehemiah, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people the Law, seeing the peoples sorrow said to all the people:

- This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep. ¹⁰Then said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord." (Neh. 8:9-10).

The memorial part of the food offering that was consumed by fire on the brazen altar of burnt offering signified the LORD sharing the meal with the priests and accepting the offering of the people. This memorial portion of the food offering was a pleasing fragrance before the LORD signifying Christ the sweet-smelling sacrifice with which his heavenly Father was well pleased.

- Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering (a sweet smelling savour in KJV) and sacrifice to God. (Ephes. 5:2)

The people of Israel were never to eat the fat, for all fat of the inward parts was to be the LORD'S forever.

- The priest shall burn them ((the fat covering the entrails, the two kidneys, the loins and the long lobe of the liver) on the altar as a food offering with a pleasing aroma. All fat is the LORD's. ¹⁷It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, in all your dwelling places, that you eat neither fat nor blood. (Lev. 3:16-17).

You shall eat neither fat nor blood: (v17) not just at the tabernacle, but throughout all their cities, towns, villages and land, this was to be a perpetual statute for all Israel's' generations, meaning until the end of the Mosaic dispensation and the Messiah came, and is offered up as a sacrifice

for the people. It was to be a perpetual statute for all Israel's generations, for the following three reasons:

1. To prevent uniting with idolaters, who used to drink the blood of their sacrifices, believing they would gain the strength and vitality of the animal by doing so.
2. To remind them that God is with them in a unique manner and desires His people to share their life with Him.
3. To ingrain upon their mind that under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (Hebrews 9:22).
4. To signify God desires the inward parts of his people (i.e., their love and devotion) and not just outward works.
5. To continually ingrain upon their mind the mystery of the prophecies concerning the sacrifice of Christ and his atoning blood for all mankind and that without a blood sacrifice no one can be reconciled to God.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

Bible House of Grace