

3. Grain Offering and Peace Offering

January 22, 2009

Last week we learned about the burnt offering which was a portrait of Jesus in depth as well as in His death. That was one of the many angles of Jesus we can learn about Him and learn from Him.

Tonight, we are going to learn about Jesus' human side and fellowship side from the grain offering and peace offering, a.k.a. fellowship offering.

A. THE PROCEDURE OF THE GRAIN OFFERING

Leviticus 2:1-3 'When anyone offers a grain offering to the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it. 2 He shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests, one of whom shall take from it his handful of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. And the priest shall burn it as a memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord. 3 The rest of the grain offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'. It is most holy of the offerings to the Lord made by fire.

It sounds like a recipe for bread and that is exactly what it is. The Grain Offering portrays the humanity of Jesus in all His perfection. His deity is not in the picture. He was perfectly a human without sin. Great theologian Jerry Hamby once told me, "I am a perfect man, because I am a perfect sinner." God's goal for man is fulfilled in Jesus. He is the second man, but the last Adam. Imperfection is the very best that we can do. However, this offering was done by itself, but rather it was done with other offerings, such as burnt offering or peace offering.

The officiating priest put only a portion of the offering on the altar – the "memorial portion" for the Lord – where it was consumed in the fire. The rest of the offering went to the priests for their own personal use.

The offering was to be made of fine flour and fine flour in that day was not common like now. They actually ground it by hand in a kind of rock bowl. To make a batch of fine flour, someone had to spend a great deal of time and care.

This offering represents Jesus Christ as the Bread of Life, the perfect One who nourishes our inner person as we worship Him and meditate and study His Word. This explains why God laid down such strict conditions for the offerer to meet before the grain offering would be accepted.

Olive oil in the Bible often speaks of the Holy Spirit. You will notice that here it is "oil upon it." In v4-5 it is "mingled with oil". In v6 it is "pour oil on it". And in v7 it is "with oil."

The prominence of the Holy Spirit in the human life of Jesus is very noticeable. He was born of the Spirit in Luke 1:35 – "mingled with oil". He was baptized of the Spirit in Matt. 3:16-17 – "oil upon it". He was led of the Spirit in Mark 1:12 – "pour oil on it". Jesus taught, performed miracles, and offered Himself in the power of the Holy Spirit – "with oil".

This word picture of the Holy Spirit with Jesus makes us to ask ourselves: If Jesus needed the Holy Spirit this much even though He was God Himself, how much more do we need Him to be instructed and anointed by the Lord?

Frankincense was made from a secret formula. There evidently was a form of incense with which it was mixed in Exodus 30:34. It was made from some part of a plant or tree, perhaps the bark or leaves, and it brings forth its fragrance only when crushed, beaten, burned, or put under pressure. This speaks of the life of the Lord Jesus as He manifested the fragrance of His life under the fires of tension, pressures, and persecution.

When I was in Bulgaria for our church pre-mission trip several years ago, I was told that Bulgarian rose petal oil is famous as one of very expensive perfume ingredients.

To produce two pounds of rose oil extract, 5,500 to 6,600 pounds of roses petals are consumed. The petals picking time lasts for only 20 days every year. In order to produce the most of rose oil and with the best quality, rose pickers go out to the fields at five o'clock in the morning to pick rose petals with dews.

Rose oil is contained even in the most expensive perfume by Clive Christian and takes one year to make. It costs you a mere \$2,369.50 for a one ounce bottle. One droplet of the luxurious liquid contains the essential oil of at least 170 roses. Ladies, ask your husband to buy you this fancy perfume tomorrow morning.

B. DIFFERENT TYPES OF GRAIN OFFERING

Leviticus 2:4-10 'And if you bring as an offering a grain offering baked in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. 5 But if your offering is a grain offering baked in a pan, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened, mixed with oil. 6 You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering. 7 'If your offering is a grain offering baked in a covered pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. 8 You shall bring the grain offering that is made of these things to the Lord. And when it is presented to the priest, he shall bring it to the altar. 9 Then the priest shall take from the grain offering a memorial portion, and burn it on the altar. It is an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord. 10 And what is left of the grain offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'. It is most holy of the offerings to the Lord made by fire.

No matter which types of the grain offering the offenders bring to the priest, it had to be prepared. We can imagine an ancient Jewish woman carefully preparing the best her kitchen could make and presenting it to God as a sacrifice. This expression of devotion to God began at home and if offered with the right heart, it was a sweet aroma to the LORD. By the way, the covered pan worked like a modern deep-fried doughnut without yeast.

I am sure that you all have noticed that fire is mentioned over and over. It is God's purifying energy and power which brought out the sweetness in the life of Christ.

The Lord uses the same fiery trials to purify us and to bring power into our lives that we may become more like Jesus our Savior.

C. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE GRAIN OFFERING

Leviticus 2:11-16 'No grain offering which you bring to the Lord shall be made with leaven, for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey in any offering to the Lord made by fire. 12 As for the offering of the firstfruits, you shall offer them to the Lord, but they shall not be burned on the altar for a sweet aroma. 13 And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you

shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt. 14 'If you offer a grain offering of your firstfruits to the Lord, you shall offer for the grain offering of your firstfruits green heads of grain roasted on the fire, grain beaten from full heads. 15 And you shall put oil on it, and lay frankincense on it. It is a grain offering. 16 Then the priest shall burn the memorial portion: part of its beaten grain and part of its oil, with all the frankincense, as an offering made by fire to the Lord.

I think all of you already know that 'leaven' in the Bible usually represents 'sin.' This leaven wasn't merely yeast, but a pinch of dough left over from the previous batch, as in the making of sourdough bread.

This was how bread was commonly leavened in the ancient world, and a little pinch of dough from the old lump could make a whole new lump of dough rise and puff up. In other words, the work of leaven was considered an illustration of the work of sin and pride. The presence of a little can corrupt a large amount.

Honey is a natural sweetness and represents our own self-righteousness. It was a favorite sacrifice to pagan deities.

Having no leaven and honey represent that our Lord Jesus had no sin found in His life and no self-righteousness in Him – a complete devotion and dedication to the Father's command and led by the Spirit of the Living God.

Salt is the final ingredient which was included in the meal offering. Salt is a preservative and is the opposite of leaven. Leaven produces decay, but salt preserves from corruption. "The salt of the covenant" is still eaten among Arabs as a seal to bind one in faithful obedience to a covenant.

Salt was the token of faithfulness between the offerer and God. Christ is Faithful and True. He is the Lord Jesus.

Christ offered Himself to God. We also can offer ourselves to God because of His mercy. We ought to be found faithful. Christians are to be the salt in the world. We do this by offering ourselves as a living sacrifice to God according to Romans 12:1-2.

The idea of firstfruits was important. The first of the harvest and the firstborn of livestock belonged to the LORD. This could be considered risky giving because the land might not yield much more produce, and the cow or sheep might not give birth again - yet the first still belonged to God. The LORD promised to bless this giving of the firstfruits and firstborn in faith.

Proverbs 3:9-10 Honor the Lord with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; 10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.

As I have said so many time before, giving to the Lord is an expression of faith in Him, not that He needs ours.

D. PEACE OFFERING OR FELLOWSHIP OFFERING

Leviticus 3:1-5 'When his offering is a sacrifice of a peace offering, if he offers it of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish

before the Lord. 2 And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood all around on the altar. 3 Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire to the Lord. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, 4 the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; 5 and Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is on the wood that is on the fire, as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.

The peace offering speaks of the communion and fellowship of believers with God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is our peace who has broken down every wall for us that we may enter into the holiness of God through His blood of reconciliation.

In contrast to the burnt offering, a peace offering sacrifice could be either a male or female animal. However, the animal still had to be without blemish.

There was no mention made of what to do with meat portions of the animal. This was because the meat portion was to be shared, with a part given to the priests and part given to the one who brought the offering who ate it as part of a fellowship meal with God.

This was not an offering to make peace with God, but an offering to enjoy peace with God. The whole reason Jesus made peace between the Father and the believer is so that the peace could be enjoyed.

The greatest peace offering ever made happened when Solomon dedicated the temple, offering 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep according to 1 Kings 8:63. I bet that was quite a BBQ party.

We must note that there are some differences between burnt offering and peace offering. All of the burnt offering was placed on that altar to be burned. In the peace offering, only a portion was offered. The portion was specified. It was to be the choice portion which included the fat and the inward parts. These speak of the hidden riches, the precious qualities, the priceless value of the character of Christ that God alone knows.

When we have peace of God, then we can have rest in Him which allows us to have faith in Him. In other words, without faith, we cannot rest in Him and we cannot have peace in Him.

While you are waiting upon or choose to do something, if you have an unrested heart, you can be sure that there are two distinctive possibilities:

1) You are not believing the power and faithfulness of God by your choice. We should not rely on the circumstantial evidences or our own fearful feeling, but believe in His faithfulness.

2) The Holy Spirit who lives in you is telling you that you are not doing what the Lord wants you to do.

The Word of God is the light that shed illumination to us. If what you are doing is against the Bible, it is a good indication that you are going a wrong way. Instead of trying to convince the Holy Spirit that you are doing a right thing, we should stop and obey Him.

We have pretty much the same procedure for lamb and goat in v6-16.

E. THE FAT AND THE BLOOD BELONG TO GOD

Leviticus 3:17 'This shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall eat neither fat nor blood.'

There was a spiritual significance to this command relevant to the peace offering. We enjoy peace with God by giving Him the best – represented by the fat – and by giving Him our lives – represented by the blood.

There also was a practical significance to this command. The prohibition of eating fat was good for Israel from the standpoint of blood-cholesterol and heart disease. It was especially good because tapeworms were often found in the fatty tissues and by obeying this command, the ancient Israelites avoided these dangerous parasites.

F. APPLICATIONS

1) We should not hold our best back from our Lord, rather bring it to Him. Because He deserves our best.

2) There is no place for pride, sin and self-righteousness in our worship to our God.