

## The Law of the Peace Offering

### Leviticus chapter 3 and 7v11-37

We often think of peace offerings in terms of a gift that is given to heal a damaged relationship. In the O.T. however, the peace offering was more of a spontaneous expression of gratitude for God's favour and blessing.

The peace offering differs from the first two sacrifices in two main respects : Firstly, the peace offering was an optional sacrifice, which a man could bring when he felt like it. Lev 7v12ff gives three possible reasons for bringing it : as a thanksgiving offering, as a free-will offering, or to fulfil a vow. Unlike the burned offering and grain offering, it did not form part of the daily offerings in the temple. The other principal difference was that the worshipper was allowed to eat part of the animal himself. In the burned offering the whole animal was burned, and in the grain offering all but the memorial portion was eaten by the priest. In the peace offering some of the animal was burned, some was eaten by the priests, and the rest was returned to the worshipper to be eaten with his friends and family and other invited guests (Lev 7v15-21; Deut 12v6,7) the sacrificial meal became an occasion of great joy and thanksgiving in the presence of the Lord. It expressed the peaceful relationship that existed between the worshipper and God as well as a healthy communal spirit of love and fellowship.

1. The Procedure The procedures of this ritual are the same as for the burned offering. The worshipper brings the animal to the door of the tabernacle and then he lays his hand on its head. He then slaughters the animal and the priests splash the blood on the sides of the altar. Unlike the burned offering only specified parts of the animal are to be burned on the altar. All of the fat of the entrails is to be removed with the liver and kidneys: throughout the O.T the fat is the best, choicest part of the animal and belonged to God.

#### Significance of the Peace Offering

Many scholars suggest that the peace offering had no atoning value. This is entirely wrong because everything in Lev 3 has a God-ward emphasis.

It was a sweet aroma which soothed God's anger v5,16

It was a blood sacrifice which atones for the soul Lev 17v10-12

The worshipper placed his hand on the head of the animal - substitution v2,8,13

The peace offering was burned on top of the burned offering v5

Ezekiel 45v13-17 describes peace offerings as making atonement.

#### Peace Offerings and the N.T.

1. They point to Christ our peace offering who has made peace through the blood of His cross ( Col 1v20, Eph 2v14, Rom 5v1)
2. They point to our celebratory meal - "The Lord's supper"
3. They point to our life in community - Acts 2v44-47, Heb 13v15,16
4. They point to the future - The wedding supper of the lamb ( Rev 19v1-9)