

The Law of the Offerings



OVERVIEW

To begin this study I would like to express my gratitude to the Holy Spirit for giving me understanding and insight in a topic requiring such depth of interpretation. As flawed and self-centered humans, it is easy for us to assume that our knowledge comes from ourselves. This is true to a degree, as God has given us intelligent minds, but when it comes to understanding the things of the Spirit, we need The Spirit to teach us. Thus is my claim here. It is only by the Holy Spirit that any man or woman will gain understanding in the material that is presented before them through this study. My prayer is that as you *search for the truth*, the Holy Spirit will be faithful to reveal the power of Christ to you. Amen

CHRIST OUR REPRESENTATIVE

In my search to better understand Christ, I was taken back to the Old Testament, where Christ was first revealed to us. I have come to realise that without knowledge of the Old Testament I will strain to understand any of the fullness of the New Testament. Thus I was brought to Leviticus where we discover the magnitude and depth of what the Lord did for us, both as a man who lived amongst us and as a man who died for us. It is here that my indebtedness to Him has been magnified in my mind; it is here that I see Christ not only as a man, and as God Himself, but also as my Priest, who partakes in the joy of His offering.

THE REPRESENTATIONS OF CHRIST

Before we look in length at the different types of offerings I feel that if we are to apprehend the depth of the sacrifices more fully, it is necessary to identify the representations made of Christ throughout. In each and every case of an offering being made, there are always 3 parties involved; the offering, the offerer and the Priest, and of course all offerings are made to God. Each of these parties has an important role in the presentation of the offering to God. In the psychical sense each of these roles is play by different parties; the offering is the offering, the offerer is the offerer and the Priest is the Priest. As the offerings represent Christ, He plays and fulfills each role as indicated. *He is* the sum of the offerings.

CHRIST AS THE OFFERING

In the Levitical laws the offering was usually an animal and at times also of grain. We will see further on how each has its place. However, in any form, the offering is always Christ. The offering is of Himself; either in the form of His death or of His life. His blood was shed, His life dissected, His body bruised, yet Himself perfect. The offering stood in the place of the offerer, as his own identity. Thus another party was made to suffer for the offerer to bring an acceptable offering before God. Christ, as the offering, was presented as a substitute for sinners. Christ was the innocent victim, a sweet savour to God, who freely gave of His life as a once and for all offering of worship, satisfaction, peace and expiation to God.

CHRIST AS THE OFFERER

In the Levitical laws the offerer brought an offering to the Priest to represent himself before God. As the offerer we see Christ as “man under the law”, our substitute, standing before God as an offerer. He took the body prepared for Him as His offering, that in it we might be reconciled to God. It can seem a little like we offered Him up but the truth is that He offered Himself. He is the only man who could offer Himself as a perfect sacrifice. Christ, as the offerer, presented Himself as an offering so that He could fulfill all righteousness for us.

CHRIST AS THE PRIEST

In the Levitical laws the Priest was the mediator between God and Man. No layman could come before God without mediation. Christ is “our High Priest”, and as a Priest He was able to mediate between Himself, as a man under the law, and God the Father. Christ as the Priest took the blood of the offering of His body, into the Holiest of Holies and presented it before God. God seeing Christ as His mediator accepted the offering on behalf of ‘men under the law’ and was completely satisfied.

It is easy already to think of Christ as the *sum of the offerings*, yet there is still more to be discovered of Christ and His amazing sacrifice.

THE OFFERINGS

Most Christians, and I say that because was one of them, see Christ's death as a sacrifice for sin, and they are right, it is exactly that, but it is more than that, so much more. In the Levitical laws there were different sacrifices for different purposes. Some were presented to God as an offering of praise and worship and others as expiation for sin or trespass. In fact there were five offerings which the Israelites were expected to adhere to. Of these offerings we will see that there are different grades according to the wealth status of the individual. Some presented a bullock while others presented a turtle-dove, yet both were acceptable offerings for the same purpose. Below is a brief mention of they types and grades of offerings.

THE TYPES OF OFFERINGS

The different types of offering can be seen as aspects of Christ's work or person. He fulfilled them all. The only thing that is left to discover is *how* did He fulfill them all? We will discover this in more detail as we move on but for now let's look at the 2 main categories of offerings.

OFFERINGS OF A SWEET SAVOUR

"A sweet savour unto Jehovah" Lev 1:9, 13, 17

The offerings in this category were to be pleasing to God. The offerer is offering something to God in an act of praise and worship. Here we see the offerer as a worshiper without sin, coming purely to worship their God. Of course Christ is the sum of the sweet savour offerings. He comes perfect and pleasing to God, yet as a man under the law' to offer of Himself in an act of worship, to represent the fallen human race. The thought here is not "God hath made Him to be sin for us" but rather "He loved and gave Himself for us as an offering and sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savour." Christ in perfectness was meeting God in Holiness, offering to Him something that is most precious to Him that will satisfy Him forever. Here in contrast to the *offerings not of a sweet savour* Christ is not seen as sin bearer but as perfect offering; these offering are not concerned with sin but rather with worship.

There are three offerings in this category:

1. The Burnt Offering
2. The Meal Offering
3. The Peace Offering

OFFERINGS NOT OF A SWEET SAVOUR

The offerings in this category are purely for the purpose of expiation of sin. In this category the offering is charged with the sin of the offender and is *not* a pleasing aroma to God. It is necessary that the offerings be made, yet God finds no delight in them. These are not an act of worship before God. The sad acknowledgment of these sacrifices is that someone has been wronged, either God or man. In the case of the sin offering, Christ was burdened with all of our sin, even while perfect in Himself, so that we could be cleansed of our sin. A point to note is that even though the offerings were not for worship; the offering itself was still required to be innocent and yet would take on the sin of the offender. If the offering itself was not perfect, then it would require an offering for itself, or its death would only cover itself. Therefore we have, in Christ, the perfect offering which is charged with our sin, redeeming us unto righteousness.

There are two offerings in this category:

1. The Sin Offering
2. The Trespass Offering

THE GRADES OF THE OFFERINGS

This can be a rather confusing area of study, yet it is important to at least acknowledge the differences and gain as much understanding in this area as we can. In fact, through my study of this topic, I found the interpretation of the grades very significant and applicable to my own life. We will find as we go through that people of different wealth are required to offer by their means. In other words, those that are wealthy will be required to offer an offering of more value than that of a poorer person; sounds fair. But we need to remember that the Levitical offerings were made to be a shadow of things to come. The under girding of the entire Old Testament is Christ Himself, these offerings are about Him. What we will find, as I attempt to explain it, is that the different grades of physical offerings represent the different grades of interpretation and understanding of the Man Jesus Christ.

One may seem more superior than the other, and although this could be seen as true, we need to remember that Christ is the sum of the offerings. That means that the greatest to the least of the offerings was fulfilled in Christ. So, yes, although the “wealthier” of offerings represents the highest thought of Christ, the “poorer” of offerings is no less true of Him. Although all are true, we each differ in our understanding or apprehension of what each represents. For example I might see Christ’s offering as ‘passive submission’ where someone else’s view might be of His ‘untiring labour’ while on earth. Each is true, but to only see Him as one is to miss a totally different Christ than what an entire understanding will bring. We will see each in more detail as we go through but let’s, for a moment, do a brief overview to help you understand.

ANIMAL OFFERINGS

OFFERING OF THE HERD

The Bull is the most costly of offerings. It signifies strength to labour; “For great increase is by the strength of the ox” (Prov 14:4). When a Bull is offered it represents service, of patient untiring labour. This is seen in the life that Christ lived here on earth as a man. In Mark we see Jesus in this very light (Mark 1:35; 3:20; 6:30-44) and also in John (John 4:31-34). The untiring Servant’s focus was on the work of the Lord not on His own needs and wants. His service was to the people for the Glory of God.

OFFERING OF THE FLOCK

The Sheep has a lower value. It signifies passive submission without a murmur, for as it is written “He was led as a lamb to the slaughter” (Acts 8:32). Here we see the submissive, uncomplaining character of Christ’s sufferings. I know for me, this has been the interpretation of Christ’s offering that is foremost in mind. I know that many people look at Jesus during His time of suffering under Pilot and a tear comes to their eye in awe of what He suffered and in what humility; and rightfully so. Our great Saviour did this for us; but do we acknowledge deeply the sacrifice of submission and humility of His life as He gave up His every waking moment to comfort, heal and teach? Here we are beginning to see how our apprehension of Christ does not encompass the entirety of who He is.

The Goat is a little more complicated to understand, but I will present my findings and encourage you to do some searching of your own to discover the meaning that it holds for you. The goat typically reminds us of Christ’s offering as a scape-goat for us. The goat, in my understanding, would be more rightfully placed in the area of sin-offerings. I think the most common understanding of Christ’s sacrifice is that He died for our sins so that we could be free in Him. If this is true however, it does not really fit into the *offerings of a sweet savour* which is where it is first presented. My understanding here is that it is possible for there to be apprehension enough to see Christ bringing His offering without distinguishing the different aspects of that offering. In the lower grades of all offerings, the distinctive character of the particular offering is constantly lost sight of, while a thought or view of some other offering is partially substituted in its place. It is simply a measure of our understanding of His sacrifice. Some see Christ’s sacrifice as a scape-goat when spiritual growth and insight would lend them more to understand that portion of the total sacrifice in its place while still able to acknowledge the others. Some simply don’t see the untiring labourer, or the lamb led to the slaughter; all they see is that Jesus died for their sin so I could be free; to them that *is* the sacrifice and they ask “What more is there?”

OFFERING OF THE BIRDS

The turtle-dove or Young Pigeon is of the lowest value. It signifies mourning innocence. “We mourn like doves” (Isa 59:11) and “Be harmless like doves” (Matt 10:16).

There are other grades encompassed in the offering however I feel that the above examples are revealing enough to give a basic understanding of some of the difference. The main thing to note about the different grades is that they represent to us how much understanding we have of the sacrifice of Christ. He did more than just die for our sins; there was more to the life of Christ than His death and resurrection. It is enough for some to know that the blood was sprinkled on the doorpost and they care not to know more of him who sprinkled it. We will talk more in depth of these and the other grades involved in the various sacrifices as we address each offering in more detail. Let’s start with the Burnt Offering.

THE BURNT OFFERING

Leviticus 1:1-17

As we have noted already, the Burnt Offering falls unto the category of the *offerings of a sweet savour*. This is the first type of offering that is mentioned in the law of the offering in the book of Leviticus. The fact that it is the first offering is significant and we will touch on that at the end of this section, but let's look first at some of the details that are specific to the Burn Offering:

1. A sweet savour offering
2. An offering for acceptance
3. At the door of the Tabernacle
4. A life was offered
5. It was wholly burnt

KEY POINTS

A SWEET SAVOUR OFFERING

Leviticus 1:9

...”and the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.”

As previously discussed, a *sweet savour offering* is one that is offered to God for his pleasure. The offering must be without blemish and on it are sprinkled fragrances pleasing to God. This is an offering that God is pleased with. The offering is not for our confession, nor for our trespasses. The offerer comes as sinless, ready to please the Lord with an offering that truly satisfies Him.

THE FOOD OF GOD

The burnt offering is called that because that is exactly what it becomes, burnt. The offering is placed on the altar and consumed by the Fire from Heaven (Lev 9:24). The altar is “The table of the Lord” (Mal 1:12) and anything that is placed on it is “The Bread (food) of God” (Lev 21:8). This then is the first thought presented to us in the Burnt Offering; God finds food, that is, satisfaction, in the offering. The fire from Heaven, representing the Holiness of God, is what consumes the offering. God's Holiness meets an unblemished offering and is pleased; He feeds (so to speak) on the purity of the offering. So it was with Christ's sacrifices of Himself, His perfect spotlessness and devotion was a sweet feast to the God of Heaven. Here finally, was something according to His taste; here, if nowhere else, He found satisfaction.

AN OFFERING FOR ACCEPTANCE

Leviticus 1:3

*”If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it **of his own free will** at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD.”*

The phrase “of his own free will” is indicated in the Strong's (OT 7522) to mean “to gain himself acceptance” before God. The offerer was presenting himself as a worshiper before God. As only pure sacrifices could be made to God, he presented an unblemished animal in the hope to gain acceptance from God as a worshiper. No sinner can appear before God as acceptable in his own right; he requires a representative to be slain for him, to gain his acceptance for him before God. It is still the same today. None of us are able to come before God without “acceptance”. Christ represented the sin stained man for us, offering His perfect life as the offering of acceptance for us before God. Christ's perfect sacrifice gained Himself and those of His body acceptance in the sight of God. We now can come to God as worshippers acceptable in His sight and with worship pleasing to Him.

AN ATONEMENT

Leviticus 1:4

Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.

When I first read this verse I was confused, because the *sweet aroma offering* was one of worship not one for atonement of sin; yet here we see that the offerer is being atoned for. As we'll see later on in the Sin Offering, the offering took the

sin of the offerer and had to be taken outside the camp to be burned; it could not be burned on the altar because it was bearing the sin of the offerer which is not pleasing to God. So my difficulty with this verse is that if the animal is making atonement for the offerer why is it still being burned on the altar here? My understanding is that we are sinners ALL the time and just because we are offering a sacrifice of worship to God we still have no right to present ourselves before Him, in fact we can't; light and darkness can not inhabit together. Thus there is a need to be presented as clean before God. It carries on the thought of the previous verse about acceptance before God. The word 'atonement' in the Strong's (OT 3722) means "to cover", so although the offerer wasn't being officially 'forgiven of sins' he was being covered by the perfection of the offering, so that he could come before God having made satisfaction. The satisfaction of God in this context is that of fulfilling a holy requirement, as opposed to satisfying offended justice, as would be the case in the Sin-Offering.

For the animal to be accepted on behalf of the offerer, the owner had to place his hands firmly on the head of the animal. This, according to Matthew Henry's Commentary, signifies:

- ✳ The transfer of all his right to, and interest in, the beast, to God, actually, and by a manual delivery, resigning it to his service.
- ✳ An acknowledgment that he deserved to die, and would have been willing to die if God had required it, for the serving of his honour, and the obtaining of his favour.
- ✳ A dependence upon the sacrifice, as an instituted type of the great sacrifice on which the iniquity of us all was to be laid.

Matthew Henry's Commentary sums the idea up quite well below:

The offerer's putting his hand on the head of the offering was to signify his desire and hope that it might be accepted from him to make atonement for him. Though the burnt-offerings had not respect to any particular sin, as the sin-offering had, yet they were to make atonement for sin in general; and he that laid his hand on the head of a burnt-offering was to confess that he had left undone what he ought to have done and had done that which he ought not to have done, and to pray that, though he deserved to die himself, the death of his sacrifice might be accepted for the expiating of his guilt.

AT THE DOOR OF THE TABERNACLE

Leviticus 1:5

"He shall kill the bull before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of meeting."

The brazen altar of burnt-offerings, which stood at the door of the tabernacle, which is the dwelling place of God, was the place for sanctification of gifts. The fact that the altar was outside the door and not inside signifies that one is not worthy to enter into covenant and communion with God, except by sacrifice. The place of "meeting" acknowledges his communion with the whole body of Christ even in his personal service.

A LIFE WAS SACRIFICED

Leviticus 1:5

"He shall kill the bull before the LORD; and the priests... shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar..."

The blood is the life of all beings and represents life in the Holy Scriptures (Gen 9:4). What we see occurring in this offering is the life of the animal, which represents the offerer's life, being sprinkled out on the altar before God. This very act represents the fulfillment of the first and greatest commandment which is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind" (Luke 10:27). From the beginning, God claimed life as His and this now stands to represent what we owe Him. What we owe to God is our duty to Him; thus the life yielded is man's duty to God. Jesus so perfectly and willingly represented us before God as a life lived, wholly and completely for the service and communion of the Lord. The blood is what satisfies God and the shedding of the blood of Christ was a pleasing aroma to God forever (Eph 5:2). The flesh in itself is unsavory but the act of obedience to a divine command is well pleasing to God. The blood is what covers us (Lev 17:11) and gives us right standing before God. The laying down of our life and everything we are, to God, in faith repentance and devotedness is what is most pleasing to Him; it is the sweetest offering.

WHOLLY BURNT ON THE ALTER

Leviticus 1:9

“And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.”

The entire animal was burnt before God; none was left unburned. Man's duty is not the giving up of one faculty but of the entire being. The offering of your life to God (blood) requires the full offering of your entire being. It is different in this fact, from all the other offerings; no other offering presented the entire animal on the altar. The Gospels are full of examples of how Jesus offered of His whole self in every aspect of service and worship to God.

The other thing to note is that the offering was totally consumed on the altar; as a symbol that it was entirely for God. We will see in other offerings how the flesh of the animal is to be eaten by various parties, but in this case no one ate of the burnt offering; it was presented as food before God. It is so easy for Christians to offer their life to God yet keep a portion back for themselves; and while in some forms of offering this is purposeful (as we will see) it is not an acceptable practice here in the burnt-offering. Had the offerer or priest withheld any portion of the animal the sacrifice would have been an offense to God and unacceptable. The burnt-offering requires ALL of the faculties of the offering. The inspection meant there was no outward blemish the washing showed there was no inward blemish. Christ was scrutinized both outwardly and inwardly by man and God respectively. Man could find no fault in him and God could see no fault in him. The different parts described in these verses represent and indicate the fullness or completeness of the sacrifice:

Leviticus 1:6-9

*⁶ “And he shall skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces...⁸ Then the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, **the head**, and **the fat** in order on the wood that is on the fire upon the altar; ⁹ but he shall wash its **entrails** and its **legs** with water.”*

THE SKIN

The skin was kept by the Priest (Lev 7:8). The skin being the only part of the animal that wasn't burnt, the skin being a memorial of the death of the sacrifice. The skin provided him with a covering, a robe of righteousness, reminding us that God had to kill an animal to clothe Adam and Eve with its skin covering their embarrassment. The skin was kept by the priests as their portion, the offer left not with the physical covering but with the spiritual covering and the sense that God had provided everything. We see Christ's sacrifice as clothing us with righteousness and that he takes away our embarrassment as we enter God's presence to worship him.

THE HEAD

The head is the well known emblem of *the thoughts*. We are told to “take every thought captive” and this is one of the parts of the sacrifice that was distinctively mentioned.

THE FAT

The word “fat” in the Strong's (OT 2459) means “to be fat, whether literally or figuratively; hence, the richest or choice part”. The blood, which is the life of the animal and the fat which is seen as the ‘choice part’ were both chosen of the Lord to be His specific portion of the sacrifice. In the case of the burnt-offering, God also required the entire beast, but as we will see further on in some of the other offerings, God is given only the blood and the fat. In Leviticus 3:17 God strictly commands that no one but Himself is to eat of the blood or fat.

Adam Clarke's Commentary sums it up nicely:

Since all temporal as well as spiritual blessings come from God, He has a right to require that such of them should be dedicated to His service as he may think proper to demand. He required the most perfect of all the animals, and the best parts of these perfect animals. This He did, not that He needed anything, but to show the perfection of His nature and the purity of His service. Had He condescended to receive ordinary animals and the most ordinary parts of animals as His offerings, what opinion could His worshippers have entertained of the perfection of His nature? If such imperfect offerings were worthy of this God, then His nature must be only worthy of such offerings. It is necessary that everything employed in the worship of God should be the most perfect of its kind that the time and circumstances can afford. Since sensible things are generally the medium through which spiritual impressions are made, and the impression usually partakes of the nature of the medium through which these impressions are communicated; hence, everything should not only be decent, but as far as circumstances will admit dignified, in the

worship of God: the object of religious worship, the place in which he is worshipped, and the worship itself, should have the strongest and most impressive correspondence possible.

Andrew Jukes believes that the fat represents the general energy, health and vigour of the whole beast. This leads to the notion of the sacrifice not being only parts of the whole, but also the motivation and drive of the entire being. This is open for interpretation.

THE ENTRAILS

The entrails or “the inwards” are a familiar symbol of *the feelings and affections of the heart*. They represent inner purity. It is a significant reminder that God sees into our hearts and knows whether our religion is only an external display or whether our heart searches after Him and His ways.

THE LEGS

The legs are a well known emblem of *the walk*. This reminds me of the passage that says “faith without works is dead”. The indication here is that the legs represents our fruit. If *the feelings and affections of our heart* are right before God then it is impossible for us not to walk in His ways.

In summary, the scriptures have brought to our attention several parts of the body; the blood, the head, the fat, the inwards and the legs. Although each of these has their own nuance, it is important to note that each of the parts makes up the whole. Jesus is our burnt-offering; everything that He did or said was for God. He didn’t give what cost little or nothing; He gave the best of Himself, and all of Himself. He gave His life and every part of His life and Self to His Father in Heaven. This is what makes the sacrifice of our Saviour so pleasing to God; and it is this, which affords us the opportunity to come before God in praise and worship with full acceptance.

A BURNT SACRIFICE

Leviticus 1:9

⁹*And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.*

The meaning of “burnt sacrifice” according to Strong’s (OT 5930) is, “ascending, going up”. Whenever anything was burnt on the altar was seen to be a pleasing savour to God as the smoke of the sacrifice rose to Heaven. That is why anything that was burnt on the altar had to be without blemish, anything other than perfect would be distasteful and rejected by God. It wasn’t just a matter of making any old sacrifice, it was about offering something to God of a sweet savour that pleased Him, after all they were doing it for His pleasure and acceptance.

DISCRIMINATIONS AND OMISSIONS

ITS GRADES – DIFFERENT MEASURES OF APPREHENSION

As mentioned in the overview, the different grades of offerings signify the different apprehensions that we each have about the sacrifice of Jesus. It is one thing to know that Christ was an untiring servant but it is another thing to see that as part of His sacrifice. For some it was just something that He did, but those that are actively walking in His footsteps of untiring service will know how much of a sacrifice His daily life was. This aspect of Christ’s sacrifice is the least seen by most people, thus why the offering of most value was the *bull*. Christ as the submissive lamb that was lead to the slaughter is probably the most thought notion of when pondering His sacrifice and although this is a true aspect, it does not complete the picture, thus we see that the *lamb* is the second of value in the offerings. The third and final animal was the *bird*. Those that see Christ and mourn for His innocence and harmlessness are seeing only the smallest details in the power of His sacrifice. It is important for us to grasp the entirety and fullness of the life and death of Christ. To miss one aspect is to miss the fullness of Christ and thus the power of Himself in our life.

LAYING OF HANDS

As mentioned earlier, the laying on of hands was to signify that the offerer recognised and accepted that the unblemished animal would stand in his place of punishment and represent him as pure and pleasing to God. This only occurred in the offering of the bull. Here we see Christ, as the offerer, laying His hands on Himself, as the offering; as the

offerer, He is transferring the guilt and blemish of all man kind onto Himself and then taking that punishment as the offering. Christ stands not only as a man representing all man kind but as a man representing each of us individually.

In this scenario we see two things; 1) Christ is willingly transferring our guilt onto Himself, 2) He is doing it for each individual. Some Christians see Christ as a sacrifice for man kind but fail to grasp the person aspect of his offering. Jesus did it for them as much as He did it for anyone. It wasn't just a free-for-all, although it is free for all; it was done for those who would come, so if you have come then He did it for you. The other limitation that the absence of *laying on of hands* brings is that some people aren't able to recognise that Christ offered Himself. They see that He died for us (as the bird shows) but the offerer (Christ representing man) is not seen. All that is seen is that Jesus had to die for our sins. The voluntary nature of His sacrifice is an important point no to miss.

OFFERER KILLS THE OFFERING

A note needs to be made about the differences between the following verses Leviticus 1: 5, 11, 15. You will note that when the bull and the lamb are presented as sacrifices the offerer kills the animal, but when the bird is offered, the Priest is seen to kill the animal. We need to remember that Christ is offering, offerer and Priest. When the offerer is seen to be heavily involved in the process we see Christ as the offerer, offering Himself freely. When the offerer fades from the scene, as in the offering of the bird, the Priest is seen to be taking the life of the animal. The distinction here is very clear. In the higher grades of offering (or apprehension) the offerer, being Christ, is willingly taking His own life as a sacrifice. In the lowest grade, the offerer, which is Christ, is no longer seen to be taking His own life, but rather the Priest (Christ as mediator) is taking the life of the offering. Some may fail to see the self-sacrifice of Christ. They see Christ as the offering, and then see Christ as the Priest, but they fail to see Christ as the offerer. Their understanding is that Christ's death is the work of the Mediator (which is Christ in His official role). It all sounds similar but the key to the whole sacrifice was that He offered it of His own voluntary will, the Priest did not take His life, He gave it and as an indication of that the animal was killed by the offerer.

OFFERING DIVIDED

We see in Leviticus 1:17 that the offering of the birds did not include the division of its parts, as it did in the other animals. Apart from the blood, all the other parts are lost sight of. This speaks figuratively of the interpretations that Christians have of Christ; some will not be able to dissect His character nor work. They see Christ simply as a whole person, but have no insight into how every minute aspect of His life was part of His perfect offering to God. Those that have this view will struggle to understand or accept how Christ's life was an example for us to follow. They see a perfect and innocent man but fail to see those aspects that made Him that way.

WASHED IN WATER

Leviticus 1:9

"but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water"

You will note that in the first two grades of this offering (the bull and the lamb) that the legs and inwards were washed in water; however this is omitted in the offering of the bird. As we know, the legs signify *the walk*, and the inwards signify *the feelings and affections of the heart*. Why are these washed in water?

The washing in water is a symbol of the washing of the Word (Eph 5:26); a sanctification and cleansing with the Truth (John 17:17). The water represents the Holy Spirit acting through the Word of God. Christ, although without blemish as a man, in His feelings and walk submitted to God's Word and Spirit. As a man He was Himself sanctified by them; for "By the Word of Thy lips I have kept me" (Psalm 17:4). The law said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4:4); and Jesus, as man, did so. In every step and every feeling He obeyed.

BURNT OFFERING SUMMARY

WHAT CHRIST DID

Christ was the perfect offering, holy and completely without blemish. He willingly gave, and took, His own life. He lived every step, every thought, every moment for the will of God. He untiringly gave of Himself in His service to those who came to Him while He was here on this earth. In submission to the Father He spoke not a word as He was punished and burdened for our transgressions. All of this, against His innocence, is the greatest injustice that this world will ever

witness. Christ not only gave Himself for us and God, but He lived for us and God too. Every thought, every emotion, every feeling, every step was dedicated in purity before God. He gave His life blood, both on the cross and as He lived; and He gave not just all of Himself, but the best of Himself. Christ's unblemished offering has granted us acceptance before God our Father; an acceptance that could never have been obtained any other way. He offered to God the most fragrant offering of worship, His life.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO

We should follow His example. It is true that we can not present ourselves as the perfect offering to gain ourselves acceptance before God, nor to expiate our sins; fortunately that offering has already been made. It is true however that the offer of our life to Christ can be less than pleasing to Him. Do we keep the best back for ourselves or do we offer the best of us to God. God commands the best of us, we are told not to take any for ourselves; furthermore to that He also wants our life in dedication and submission to Him. Jesus gave of Himself what cost Him the most. What would be the greatest cost to you in giving your life to God? Are you saving the fatness of your life for yourself and giving God what's left? The fatty bit may not look like much compared to the rest of the flesh, but don't let size fool you. Give God the best, and give Him all.

Paul says to the Romans in verse 12:1 "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship." God wants all of us, wholly given over to him and just as the offering was washed, God wants us to wash at the laver of his word our minds, intellects, will and emotions, our conduct and lifestyle.

THE GRAIN OFFERING

Leviticus 2:1-16

The meal-offering gives us another aspect of the perfect offering of Christ. What we saw in the burnt-offering was a life completely offered to God; the offering was consumed by Him alone. In the grain-offering (also known as the meal or meat-offering) there is no life offered. The offering was of *fine flour* which although offered to God, most of it was kept back and eaten by the Priests. The offering was a memorial to God. We mentioned earlier that the burnt-offering demonstrated a fulfillment of the first and greatest commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matt 22:37-38). As we look at the grain-offering we will begin to see the fulfillment of the second commandment "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:39). "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Although the passage describing the grain-offering doesn't indicate that it must be offered with the burnt-offering, there came a time (Num 15:1-6) where God commanded that no burnt-offering was ever to be offered without a grain-offering. That makes sense to me. Within the context of the offerings, life symbolizes what we owe God. In contrast, the grain, oil, and frankincense—the fruit of the earth—symbolize what we owe to man. Both characteristics are our duty. The one is the surrender to God of our life as it is being lived; the other is the fulfillment of our duty to our neighbor.

Though the burnt offering may appear to be the "greater" of the two, one is incomplete without the other, even as the two great commandments go together. In each case, the one shows man doing his duty to God, the other, his duty to man.

I John 4:20-21 confirms this:

"If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also."

The two must go together. The one without the other is not acceptable to God. Let's move on now to look at the grain-offering in more detail.

KEY POINTS

A SWEET SAVOUR OFFERING

Since we have already dealt with this area, I won't go into any more detail on the *sweet savour offering* except to say that it was intended to be an offering pleasing to God; a sacrifice that He delighted in.

NO GIVING OF LIFE

We saw in the burnt-offering that an animal's blood was shed; which indicates the offering of a life before God. Here in the grain-offering we see only flour being offered; no blood was shed. We know from the burnt-offering that *life* was God's claim on His creation. We also see that the produce from the land was man's claim on creation. In this offering there were four things that made the sum of the offering:

Leviticus 2:1, 13

¹"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. ¹³ And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with *salt*;"

FINE FLOUR

"His offering shall be of *fine flour*" – Flour was the basis of the offering it represented the bread of life as bread was the main support to life. Isaiah 28:28 says that "bread flour must be bruised" (KJV) i.e. beat in pieces, crushed, made dust (Strong's OT 1854). The flour was to be of the finest quality, *fine flour* fully ground and finely sifted, free from any coarseness, unevenness, and empty husks. The mill stones must grind the wheat to an absolute fineness. Christ's life was one of passing through the grinding millstone of suffering, trial, and temptation. In Christ's perfect life there was no trace of unevenness or coarseness, in public or private he was the same the perfect character, fine flour - finely sifted.

Jesus said "I am the bread of life" (John 6:48) and God was "pleased to bruise Him" (Isa 53:10) so that He could be that essential bread of our lives. Psalm 69:1-2 and 19-20 gives us a small window into the feelings of Christ as He endured the bruising necessary to be *the bread of life*.

¹"Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck. ²I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I have come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. ¹⁹You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor; my adversaries are all before You. ²⁰Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none."

Undoubtedly, Christ bore His sacrifices, rejections, and reproaches without complaint to those He was serving (1 Pet 2:23); but this does not mean they did not affect His feelings and did not take them to God for comfort and consolation. Jesus was wearied from serving His fellow man (John 4:6).

The symbolism in this is similar to the bullock of the burnt-offering—of pressing, wearying and grinding trial; but the difference in this offering is that it represents the effect of such sacrificial service to man. There are many scripture throughout the New Testament where Christ demonstrated complete self-sacrifice in His service to men (Mat 9:18-39; Mark 6:32-56)

Psalm 22:14-15 describes a small portion of the most horrific "grinding" Christ endured in His service to man:

¹⁴"I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me. ¹⁵My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death."

Isaiah 52:14 describes how Christ was bruised so badly in His service here in earth. He was sapped of all His strength that He could not bear the cross of His crucifixion alone. God was please with the constancy and *fineness* of His life and He was now ready to be the perfect *fine flour* sacrifice placed on the altar before God.

The lesson for us is that service to our fellow man is self-surrender and self-sacrifice. The nearer our service approaches His degree of self-sacrificing service the more we will resemble what happened to Him. We, too, will find ourselves bruised.

OIL

The oil was poured upon the flour. It is spoken of as being 'anointed' with oil in Lev. 7:12. Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. If the fine flour is seen as Christ's perfect life anointed with the Oil of the Holy Spirit, we easily see the sense of the Messiah being the anointed one visible in the offering. The anointing is also for the believer, yet it is necessary for the preparation of the millstones grinding. There was oil on and oil in the cakes (Lev 2:5, 6). The anointing was to do with the outward working of the Holy Spirit, while the mingling speaks of the inward working of the Holy Spirit; the indwelling. Just as every part of Christ's life, every thought, every word, every deed, was mingled (saturated) with the Holy Spirit, so should ours.

FRANKINCENSE

There must be frankincense on the offering, emitting fragrant smoke. Christ's perfect life was a sweet smelling savour to God (Eph 5:2) and we are to be a sweet savour to God (2 Cor 2:15). There are three things to note about frankincense:

1. Frankincense was exclusively for God (Lev 2:2 'all')
2. Frankincense gave a sweet fragrance that is pleasing to God
3. It was fire that drew forth the fragrance

The thought is that while going through the fiery trials of life, we submit ourselves to God and conduct ourselves in a way that is pleasing to God that He receives as a sweet smelling savour.

SALT

Another important ingredient was salt. Leviticus 2:13 makes it quite clear that salt is not an option; it's a *must*. Salt had and has several purposes, some of which I will refer to here:

1. Seasoning
2. Preservative
3. Disinfectant
4. Valuable
5. Thawing

SEASONING

In Biblical times people would shake salt into their food to bring the in inherent flavors.

PRESERVATIVE

Salt has always been used to preserve meat and other foods. It prevents decay and degradation of food products. It was also used on dead body to preserve the flesh.

DISINFECTANT

Salt was commonly used as a cleaning agent; and still is today. Infected body parts are soaked in salty water and gargling salty water help with a sore throat.

VALUABLE

Today, salt isn't some that possesses any monetary value; however in the bible times, salt was something of value often used for trading.

THAWING

Salt has always been useful for thawing and melting ice. In our day, we spread salt on roadways for this purpose.

Matthew 5:13

"You are the salt of the earth;"

By comparing His followers to salt, Jesus indicated that they were to add seasoning, to society; to improve the flavor of life by teaching God's truth and ministering to others. Jesus also taught His followers to point others to the way of life, to show how they might be preserved from death and destruction. He pointed out how their life purpose depended on their saltiness. If they were not helping others to be saved, then they were not serving their worthwhile life destiny. He also could have been urging His followers to help clean up a godless world by living godly lives and setting an example for others; thawing peoples hearts with their kindness. Either way, by retaining their loyalty and steadfastness to Him, Jesus' followers would also retain their value to His Kingdom cause.

The salt is the influence of the Spirit of God in the hearts of believers, preserving them from the evil that is in the world. Christ was full of salt. He knew and lived in the preserving and purifying principle of the salt of the Spirit. His self-denial, suppression of pride, ambition, contention etc, made Him an acceptable offering to God.

Barnes' Notes describes the salty life beautifully:

"Look at the sacrifice on the altar. It is an offering to God, about to be presented to him. It is sprinkled with "salt, emblematic of PURITY, of PRESERVATION and of fitting it, therefore, for a sacrifice." So "you" are devoted to God. You are sacrifices, victims, offerings to him in his service. To make you "acceptable" offerings, every thing must be done to "preserve" you from sin and to "purify" you. Self-denials, subduing the lusts, enduring trials, removing offences, are the proper "preservatives" in the service of God. Doing this, you will be acceptable offerings and be saved; without this, you will be "unfit" for his eternal service and will be lost."

NO LEAVEN

We have seen salt as an emblem of purity, a preservative against corruption. However we see here that *leaven* is the very essence of corruption. To mix the holy things of God with leaven (evil) is an abomination to the Lord (1 Sam 2:12). Jesus' life had not even a hint of leaven. He was completely pure, with corruption from this world.

The leaven of hypocrisy - Luke 12:1

The leaven of pride - 1 Corinthians 5:6

The leaven of sin - 1 Corinthians 5:7,8

The leaven of false teaching – Galatians 5:9

The leaven of self-indulgence - Mark 8:15

No amount of oil could counteract the presence of the leaven.

NO HONEY

Honey was also forbidden (Lev 2:11). Honey represents the things that are pleasing and attractive to the flesh. In a spiritual sense it represents those things which are self-pleasing. Honey, when it is burn, beings to ferment and turns sour; the smell of which is unpleasant. Honey, being the self-satisfying pleasures of this world, will not stand the test of being a *sweet savour* before God. When honey comes before God, it will not be accepted.

NOT WHOLLY BURNT

We see in the passage of the grain-offering, that only a handful of the flour is placed on the altar, while the rest is eaten by the Priests. A token amount was placed on the altar to signify that the offering was for God's pleasure, yet done as a service to His Priests. We are His Holy Priesthood (1 Pet 2:5). Christ sacrificed His life in the service of men to the joy of the Father. His sacrifice was dedicated to God yet provided as a blessing to men. Jesus is the "bread of life" of which we (His holy priesthood) are partakers, just as the Priests in Levitical times partook of the flour of the offering. Jesus had already given His whole life over to God by way of the burnt-offering, and part of the commitment of that offering meant that He would also be required to sacrifice His life for the service of God's people.

OFFERING OF THE FIRST FRUITS

Can't comment here yet

DISCRIMINATIONS AND OMISSIONS

BAKING METHODS

My understanding of the baking methods is very narrow. The most common idea that has been presented is that it represents the Body, Soul and Spirit; or in connection to theses, the part of Christ's sacrifice that was fully seen, partially seen and unseen. I won't dig to deeply into this area except to explain the above briefly:

BODY - FULLY SEEN - UNBAKED FLOUR

Christ's life that is seen is compared to the offering of the unbaked flour. The flour was laced n the altar in full view of everyone. It is compared to not only the period of open ministry of Christ but also of His public crucifixion. It speaks of His body in the flesh, His actions and His words that were freely seen by all.

SOUL – PARTIALLY SEEN - BAKED IN A PAN

It is noted that the method of baking the flour in a pan signifies Christ's life that is not fully seen or understood. I liken it to someone who is depressed; you may be able to see that they are unhappy but you are unable to understand the depths of their depression, nor the cause. Christ spoke of His crucifixion to His disciples, probably with a sadness in His voice, yet it wasn't until He came before God with drops of blood coming from His forehead what the extent of His suffering really was; and even then we still will never understand.

SPIRIT – UNSEEN - BAKED IN AN OVEN

The oven often typifies the unseen testing of Christ. Some say that it speaks of the 30 years leading up to His public ministry of which we know very little about. Others believe that it represents the torment of His Spirit during His broken communion with God, and the turning of His Fathers face from Him on the cross. We will never know the depths of Christ's unseen sacrifice of His Spirit.

SUMMARY

It was a sweet savour offering, like the burnt and the peace offerings, it was something pleasant and sweet to God with no thought of sin-bearing or cleansing of sin in the offering. In presenting the offering the offerer simply came to the

door of the tabernacle having prepared it as instructed and gave it to the priests. There was no ceremony just simple submission, for there was nothing meritorious in his action only obedience. We give our gifts and our service to God yet we know that man is the recipient. After a while it is easy to think that God receives nothing from our giving but that which is given is the recognition that all came from God and is the memorial of the whole all we possess. This meal offering symbolizes the consecration of gifts and service. We cannot give our gifts or our service if we have not first given ourselves; many people try to do this in the reverse order by giving things or time.

Hebrews 13:15

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”

It would seem that the offerings get a little more complicated as we go along! I have read some commentaries about the peace-offering, most of which omit comments on some of the more intricate parts of the offering; however I will endeavour to discuss as many of the details as possible without presenting my mere ‘opinion’, but rather stating supported facts or theories.

The term ‘peace-offering’, from the root *shalam*, conveys the idea of peace on the grounds of requital, it also details examples such as, “to give thanks, to make complete, to be friendly or peaceable’. It is from these three definitions that I noticed a similarity with the types of peace-offerings; I will discuss these shortly.

I would like to present a section from a commentary made by Ernie Brown called *The Peace Offering – a Figure of Fellowship* which represents a simple picture of a peace offering:

Imagine, for a moment, that I am a happily married man, which I am! Imagine, also, that I love my wife very much, which I do! Imagine, further, that I try very hard to avoid upsetting her, which, again, I do try to achieve! Imagine, however, that, one day, I do something which upsets her very much. What am I to do, to put things right, to make amends? I know. I will go out and buy the biggest box I can afford of her favourite chocolates. I do so. I give it to my wife, saying how sorry I am for what I had done. She accepts my apology. She is duly placated. She enjoys the chocolates. We are back to where we were before I offended her. Everything is fine. The enjoyment of our long-term relationship is restored. Well and good.

Now, many people would say that I had given my wife a Peace Offering. However, in the proper sense of the term, as defined in the Bible, that would not be so. Strictly speaking, I would have given her a Trespass Offering, which is not our subject now.

Imagine, then, a rather different scenario. Imagine, as before, that I am a happily married man, which I certainly am! Imagine, as before, that I love my wife very much, which I certainly do! There is no outstanding grievance between us. All is well. Imagine, then, that, thinking about this, I ask myself, ‘How can I show my wife how much I really love her? What can I do to share with her my enjoyment of our most happy relationship?’ I know! I will buy the biggest box I can afford of our favourite chocolates. We will sit down together with the box of chocolates, enjoy each other's company and the chocolates we both like, and share together our mutual appreciation of the joy of our long-term relationship.

Now, that would be a Peace Offering. Not as something necessary to make peace, or even restore peace, but rather a celebration of the peace which already exists. Note, it is the same box of chocolates, but enjoyed for a very different reason.

As we can see, the peace-offering is for the enjoyment of not only the recipient of the offering but also of the offerer; it provides for communion together. As with the other two offerings in this category, the peace-offering was intended to be a sweet savour to God, which we discussed earlier. But, I think that’s enough surface stuff for now, let’s dig a bit deeper; let’s start with my three definitions mentioned earlier.

KEY POINTS

THE PURPOSE

Leviticus 7:12 and 16 list 3 reasons for making a peace-offering:

1. Thanksgiving
2. Vow
3. Voluntary

THANKSGIVING

One of the nuances for the term 'peace-offering' which I mentioned earlier was "to give thanks"; so it seems to fit here quite well. Psalm 107 and 118 proclaim the mercy and provision of the Lord to His people, thus they had every good reason to be thankful; in fact you could turn to almost any Psalm to see the praises due to God for His loving-kindness. What other reason did the Israelites need to offer a peace-offering of thanks to their God? Each of the peace-offerings were voluntary, except for certain special days of which they were mandatory, therefore it was from a grateful and hopeful heart that the people offered their thanksgiving to God. Israel offered peace-offerings both in times of great sorrow (Judg 20:26; 21:4) and in times of great joy (Deut 27:7; Josh 8:31; 1 Sam 11:15). In each instance the peace-offering focuses on the benefits, the wholeness, which Israel is experiencing, or which she had lost (and for which she hopes), the offering then being an act of faith, a looking forward to a future wholeness or peace, which God will grant His people

FOR A VOW

The second nuance for the term 'peace-offering' was "to make complete"; and since vows should be followed through with, this definition also seems to fit quite well. A clear example of a vow offering can be seen in 1 Samuel chapter 1, where Hannah made a vow to the Lord that she would dedicate her son to the Lord if He would but give her a boy child. God answered her prayer, and as a fulfillment of that vow she gave her son to the Lord and presented a peace-offering at this time. Another expression of a vow offering can be seen in both Psalm 116 and Judges 21:4.

VOLUNTARY

Here we see the final nuance for the term 'peace-offering, which was 'to be friendly or peaceable'. The Strong's (5071) describes the word 'voluntary' as "an abundant gift, or, to give spontaneously". This would set the cats amongst the pigeons! I wonder how many of the Israelites would have felt drawn to give a spontaneous and abundant gift to God, just because they loved Him so much.

TYPES OF ANIMAL

The three types of animal that were used in the peace-offering were a bull, a lamb, or a goat; each of which have been previously discussed in the study on the burnt-offering. One writer also likened the three animals to that of three types of Christians; the worker, the waiter and the rebel. I hesitated to mention it here as I believe that although the offerings afford us the opportunity to reflect upon our lives, they were intended to foretell and be fulfilled through the life of Christ. However I believe that there is some reflective truth in the writer's thoughts so I will share them here for use in discussion.

BULL

As we know the animals of the herd are represented by the ox, the servant and worker. The bulls represents those who labour in the work of the Lord and carry a servants heart.

LAMB

God's people are most often depicted as sheep, who are followers. Sheep generally have no motivation of their own and must be lead step by step and often wonder astray. They have the tendency to be lazy and need gentle encouragement to step out in the work of the Lord. Most of us probably fit in this category.

GOAT

And then there are the goats. Goats will eat just about anything. God's people who are goats will have little discernment as to good food and bad food. Goats will butt and thrust to get into the first place. Paul warned us not to fuss and fight with one another lest be bite and devour one another and thereby be consumed of our own lusts (Gal 5:15).

But you see all of these animals, whether cattle, sheep or goats could be offered in sacrificial service. All of us have different personalities, attitudes and desires. God wants to use them all. The spirit of rebellion can be used as we rebel against the forces of evil and the powers of darkness. The spirit of waiting upon the Lord and following his every command can be used as God musters up an army of trained soldiers who will do his bidding. The spirit of servitude can be used in any aspect of the ministry. But you see we have to make an offering if God is going to use us. And we must submit to his service if we are going to be employed. God can use all three in his service if they would submit to his leadership.

A SHARED MEAL

THE PARTAKERS

GOD

As we already know God, gets the blood, which is the life of the animal, and the fat, which is the best part of the animal.

THE PRIESTS AND HIS SONS

The priest was given the breast and right thigh of the animal. My understanding is that this is linked to part of the priestly garment. In Exodus 28:5-12 and 15-30 we see that the priest was to carry the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on his breastplate and on the shoulders of his ephod. Without going into detail about why, it seems consistent that the priests would have the breast and right thigh (shoulder) for the animal which represented their role in carrying of the tribes of Israel before the Lord.

Priest of sprinkling – right thigh, heave-offering (leavened, unleavened bread)

THE OFFERER AND HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS

The offerer and his family and friends are given the remaining flesh of the sacrifice to eat before the Lord. This part of the offering was the “Body of Christ”, including His walk, thoughts, strength and affections.

COMMUNION

Each party got to eat before the Lord, meaning communion with the Lord. It is a picture of god and sinner at peace with each other, with all issues between them perfectly settled. It is peace on the basis of a mutually accepted sacrifice. It is a picture of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:19). This was not a peace offering for peace on earth, but peace between the individual sinner and God (Col 1:20). Jesus is the peace (Mic 5:5; Eph 2:13-18). The priest, the offerer and God all fed together; in this they had something in common. Man (in Christ) as offerer has his part and is permitted to share this offering with his friends. The priest (this is Christ in His official character) is satisfied also and his children are satisfied with him.

The value to God of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ is so great that the peace established by it can be fully enjoyed by all the different parties involved. There is that established by the death of Christ which God Himself enjoys. There is that which Christ personally Himself enjoys, as the fruit of His death upon the cross. There is that which can be enjoyed collectively by the Christian church, as such. There is also that which can be enjoyed by each individual Christian believer. Furthermore, all the parties involved can share that enjoyment with each other. The appropriate words to give us the right idea about the Peace Offering are words like peace, prosperity, praise, fellowship, communion, celebration.

LAWS OF CONSUMPTION

DEFILEMENT

BY DELAY

I believe that there is far more insight to be gained in this area however, I will present what I have understood thus far about the law regarding the consumption of the meat of the offering.

It seems that the most accepted notion is that of putrefication. The flesh of the offering was as holy as any other part and it must remain that way. God would not have anything unclean take part in a holy ceremony. If the flesh was kept beyond three days it was in danger of becoming fly-blown and thus unacceptable to be consumed as part of the holy offering. This idea of three days is applicable also to the resurrection of Christ after two days, that being God’s Holy one, He might not see corruption (Ps 16:10).

The other most noted aspect of the consumption, is that it is shared among and satisfies many. God would not have His people act sparingly, but rather to ensure that all the flesh is eaten, they must share generously for entertainment with family, friends, and charitably for the relief of the poor. God wanted them not enjoy the sharing of the meal and not hoard it back anxiously for tomorrow. God provided the animal for the offering and He will continue to provide the daily needs of His obedient children.

It is also worth noting that the laws of consumption were to be obeyed. If they were broken in anyway then the offering was defiled and became an abomination to the Lord, in which case the offerer's iniquities were charged to him. I am sure that there would have been many people who would have brought a sacrifice with the thought that they could keep the flesh longer than instructed. I could imagine that it would seem like such a waste to burn the left-over. But God, in His omniscience, knew this ahead of time and put these laws in place to ensure that any offerings brought before Him were done with the right intention (Prov 15:8).

BY CONTACT WITH UNCLEANNESS

As mentioned above, every aspect of the offering and those making the offering must be ceremonially clean. If the flesh touched, or was touched by, anything unclean it was unfit for use in a religious feast. We see in Haggai 2:12-13, that unclean things do not become clean by touching something clean; but clean things do become unclean by touching something unclean, which intimates that the infection of sin is more easily and more frequently communicated than the savour of grace. Every thing that we honour God with must be pure for it to be acceptable to Him. Whatever pertains to the Lord is sacred, and must be used with great reverence and not with unhallowed hands (Lev 11:44).

GRAIN OFFERING

LEAVEN?

It seems a little unusual to have an offering of leavened bread brought before the Lord since leaven represented the corruption of evil. However it is important to note that the leavened bread was not placed on the altar, which is the table of the Lord. God could not have anything unholy placed on His table as it was given to His as food; and as we know God cannot tolerate the uncleanness of the leaven. But our God is a loving God who delights in blessing His people, so knowing that unleavened bread was not as pleasant to the taste, as that with leaven; He allowed the leavened bread to be eaten during the feast so that men may feast at God's table as well as their own.

SUMMARY

The Hebrew word for peace is 'shalom' and has a greater or fuller meaning than the way peace is used today. We define peace as the absence of war or disturbance, the cessation of hostilities and harmonious agreement between people, a state of stillness and tranquility. The Hebrew word while accepting those things would add prosperity, well-being, joy, happiness, wholeness. Our understanding of peace has mainly a negative approach, a lack of something, whereas the Hebrew includes the positive aspects as well.

The peace offering was a sweet-savour offering that was offered when in communion with God. It was not compulsory but voluntary. The peace offering was a means of celebrating God's goodness, with a feast in which God participated as the honoured guest. We often forget to thank God for his goodness to us as we face the stresses and the strains of modern day life. Yet God ordained this feast, God knows that we need time out to enjoy Him and to enjoy our families and our friends.

The peace offering came out of right standing with God, not to gain it or to consecrate anything. It was a sharing of God's bounty with Him and his priests and our families and our friends, but it wasn't just a party. This was a special time to appreciate our special relationship with God and to be with Him. Very often we seek God for this or that, for the advancement of his kingdom and for his church but do we hunger and thirst after his presence, just wanting to be with him for who he is rather than what he will give.

THE ISSUE OF SIN

In order to sin, one must be disobedient to a law that God has put in place; for as John says, "sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). Take for example the first sin committed by mankind: Adam and Eve eat of the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden. If God had not said "do not eat" of the tree then they wouldn't have sinned by eating of it (Gen 2:16-17, 3:2-3,11). That leads us to our first principle...

PRINCIPLE 1 - YOU CANNOT VIOLATE OR BREAK A LAW THAT IS NOT IN FORCE

Sin was imputed to Adam because there was a law in force to prohibit what he did, and that made it a sin. This principle, although true, could cause us to quickly conclude that all sin is similar; and unless we are breaking a specific law that God has instituted then we are not sinning. This of course is not the case. Paul states in Romans 5:13 that "until the law, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed where there is no law". Adam and Eve, in that one act of disobedience, not only sinned, but brought sin into the world; and from that moment on, sin reigned in our mortal bodies (Rom 6:12). Sin may not have been imputed (attributed to a specific act) when there was no law, but "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression" (Rom 5:13). Even people who had not violated a law or commandment like Adam, still had sin, and so death reigned over them (Rom 5:12-14). Even when we think that there is no law against what we are doing, we need to remember that God is holy and is governed, and governs, by *His* moral law; when Adam and Eve sinned, they broke that moral law, even if only in one place, they broke it all and for all.

PRINCIPLE 2 – EVEN WHEN THERE IS NO LAW, NOT ALL THINGS ARE BENEFICIAL

There are many things that are not against the law of man or God. Take for example drinking alcohol; it's not against the law of man and we can see that it is not against God's law either, as we know that even Jesus drank some wine. But as Paul says "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify" (1 Cor 10:23). Paul is saying here that although it is not unlawful to eat certain foods, He is still bound by the law given to Him through Jesus which is "to love one another as Christ loved you" (John 13:34); and if eating of certain foods would cause one of his brethren to stumble or cause offence then it is no longer permissible for Him. So although there is no law against the act, there is still the law of love.

Having looked at how sin can be inherent, even without a commandment, we now come to look at whether, in any circumstances, God imputes such sin. We know that where there is a law in force, as in Adam's case, God imputes sin to those who break that law. We also know that even where there is no law, God may regard an act as sin even though he does not impute the sin. We now ask whether God imputes sin in some cases to those who commit acts that are inherently wrong, even when they have received no formal commandment regarding those acts? This brings us to notice a third principle...

PRINCIPLE 3 – THERE IS ALWAYS A LAW

Even though lacking a formal law, people can often perceive a right thing to be right and a wrong thing to be wrong, and thus become "a law to themselves" (Rom 2:12-16).

Paul pointed out early in his letter to the Romans, that people are often ignorant of God's law because they "suppress the truth" (Rom 1:18). God revealed himself to them and "they knew God" but they followed their own speculations and passions. They were "without law" because they suppressed the law they had been given, and so they were also "without excuse" (Rom 1:19-32). Paul acknowledges that even people who did not know or have the law in a formal ordinance, were able nevertheless to recognise their own inherent wrongdoing. They therefore had their sin imputed to them because they became "a law to themselves" (Rom 2:12-16). When people "know the ordinance of God" (Rom 1:32), whether or not they have a formal law, they should obey that ordinance. If instead they prefer to live in their own darkness, God imputes their sin to them.

God is fair. He neither imputes sin where it would be unjust to do so, nor does he overlook sin where that would be unjust. Paul says, "God will judge the secrets of men" according to their lights. Paul was acutely aware of this justice in his own experience. He says, "I thought to myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9-11). "I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man, but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1Tm 1:12-13).

Now notice the following points...

- ✳ Paul was acting according to his lights, yet what he was doing was wrong. He thought it was right, and he did not understand that it was wrong, however that did not make the wrong right. Sin was inherent in what Paul was doing.
- ✳ God was merciful to Paul, taking into account his ignorance and unbelief. However God's mercy in Paul's case consisted not of overlooking his sin, but of imputing it to him, confronting him with it, and making him turn his life around (1Tm 1:12-13).

PRINCIPLE 4 – THE INCREASE OF SIN IS BY THE LAW

Paul says, "The law entered that sin might increase" (Rom 5:20) and "through the commandment sin became exceedingly sinful" (Rom 7:13). Not only does law increase and invigorate sin, but it also intensifies it. The light of God's law shows up sin for what it is. When the law of Moses was introduced, there was a heavy burden of imputed sin that would not have otherwise been there had the law not been created. So why institute the law? "The law is holy, and the commandment is *"holy and just and good"* (Rom 7:12). The effect of the law, if obeyed, is to increase holiness and justice and goodness. That was the law's main purpose, however the effect of the law if disobeyed, is to increase sin. God knew this would be the case but He couldn't turn a blind eye to the sin (whether they knew they were doing it or not); He had to make His holiness known and man's sin evident. God however, had His bases covered, so that "where sin increased, *grace* abounded all the more" (Rom 5:20-21). God knew that we were under His law whether He had given it to us or not, for God is holy and He must punish sin. If God hadn't created the law to make our sins evident then we would never have had the opportunity to be right before God and we would have ended up in Hell, whether we knew it or not. God's kind intention was to increase grace and to gain victory over sin.

The very things that seem to be disadvantages of law, these very things turn out to be advantages that put God in a position to effect a solution to sin:

- ✳ Sin was imputed, but that paved the way for it to be *forgiven*
- ✳ Sin increased but by the same token *grace abounded* all the more.
- ✳ Sin sprang to life, but then it was able to be *killed*.
- ✳ Sin became exceedingly sinful, but this *showed the need* of a solution

THE OFFERING FOR SIN AGAINST GOD

UNINTENTIONAL

Leviticus 4:2

"...If a person sins unintentionally against any of the commandments of the LORD in anything which ought not to be done, and does any of them"

I'd like to look at some of the key words in this verse.

SIN

The word 'sin' (Strong's OT 2398) means 'to miss'. This word describes us as humans...we miss everything; we miss the point, the expectation, the understanding and it is plain to see that we miss the mark in everything. God is the mark of who we are as humans and we have totally missed Him and all that He had intended for us. Our sin is not merely something that we do or don't do...it is what we are; we are sinners. We are people who have 'missed the mark' and the calling of God.

UNINTENTIONALLY

The KJV uses the phrase 'through ignorance'. The Hebrew word (Strong's OT 764) means 'a mistake, transgressing without knowledge or intention.' This takes us back to the whole idea of being in the state of sin even when there is no

law instituted. The sin that is covered by this offering is that which is done without knowledge of it being wrong. Remember that just because we don't know it's wrong that doesn't make it right. God is *the law*, and if it is done against Him then it is against the law, even if we are unaware of it. This virtually covers any transgression that is done in ignorance and it also covers our sinful state as humans. We might be able to change the fact that we sin, but we can't change the fact that we are sinners.

There is one beautiful blessing hidden in the expression of 'sin through ignorance' in connection with the atonement of Christ. In contemplating the atonement, we see infinitely more than the mere satisfaction of the claims of conscience, even though that conscience had reached the highest point of sensibility. It is here that we see that which has fully satisfied all the claims of divine holiness, divine justice, and divine majesty. Man only knows his state through his conscience; that which his conscience would pass-over or things that in his heart he deems to be right, may not be tolerable by God and which, as a consequence, would interfere with man's approach to, his worship of, and his relationship with, God. It is here that we see some of the beauty of the atonement. Wherefore, if the atonement of Christ merely made provision for such sins as come within the compass of man's apprehension, we should find ourselves very far short of the true ground of peace. We need to understand that sin has been atoned for, according to God's measurement; not merely our own. This is what gives settled peace to the soul. A full atonement has been made for the believer's sins of ignorance, as well as for his known sins.

God knew what was needed in order that man might be in His presence without a single misgiving; and He has made ample provision for it in the cross. Nothing can more forcibly express man's incompetence to deal with sin, than the fact of there being such a thing as a "sin of ignorance." How could he deal with that which he knows not? How could he dispose of that which has never even come within the range of his conscience? Impossible. Man's ignorance of sin proves his total inability to put it away. If he does not know of it, what can he do about it? Nothing. He is as powerless as he is ignorant.

What a beautiful and blessed gift, even fair beyond the knowledge and understanding of most men.

AGAINST ANY

The KJV uses this phrase twice in verse 2:

Leviticus 4:2

*"...saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance **against any** of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do **against any** of them:*

What I noted is that each phrase uses a different Strong's reference. I'm not sure of how significant this is but I thought it was interesting anyway.

Against any

The first phrase (Strong's OT 3065) means "properly, the whole, any or every, to complete".

This speaks to me about the law as a whole. To me it would read better like this "*If a soul shall sin through ignorance against the law of God*". It doesn't specify how many times they sin or which law they transgress against, nor does it specify how bad the transgression is; it simply refers to the whole Holy law of God. When you sin, you sin against the law of God; that's it, the bottom line.

Against any

The second phrase (Strong's OT 259) means "one, a piece, a certain" and represents a numeral.

This speaks more to me of the individual transgression. It speaks of the transgression as an act, rather than the transgressing of the law of God in general.

I think the combination of these two phrases goes a long way to represent that which was spoken of by James:

James 2:10

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

COMMANDMENT

The root meaning of the word 'commandment' (Strong's OT 4687) means 'to set in order or constitute'. This definition helps to broaden the meaning of commandment to represent anything of which God has spoken. The English meaning of the word 'constitute' broadly bears the meaning of 'to cause'. Here are some examples of what this encompasses:

- ✳ create and charge with a task or function
- ✳ set up or lay the groundwork for
- ✳ To cause to stand; to establish; to enact; to make up; to compose; to form; to appoint, depute, or elect to an office; to make and empower

As you can see the word has a far greater meaning than simply the written or spoken law of God. The law of God is what created us (and everything in the universe) and set us with a task or function. The law of God is what lays the groundwork for our existence. The law of God, which causes us to be able to stand, is the same law that empowers us to follow Him. When Adam and Eve sinned they broke the law which created them. They were created in the image of God, for God. When then broke that law, they broke the command or constitution on which their lives were created. It is in this understanding that we are better able to see just how it is that we can transgress the law of God without even doing anything and without knowing that we have transgressed. It is this form of 'sin' which is atoned for in the Burnt Offering.

THOSE WHO SIN

THE PRIEST

Leviticus 4:3

"If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering."

The word 'priest' (Strong's OT 3548) means 'one who is officiating or chief ruler'. Most commentaries suppose that the high priest is spoken of here; but whether it was only the high priest or all priests is open for discussion. There are three points to note here:

1. The priest had greater advantage than most people in being conversant with the law of God and should have greater understanding and preservation of knowledge
2. The priests were appointed men who have weaknesses (Heb 7:28)
3. The sin of the priest brought guilt upon the people and may thereby cause the people to transgress

The function of the spiritual leadership in the land was of paramount importance, as the priests were responsible for the dissemination of Bible doctrine. The anointed priest, ordained to serve the Lord in his official position, represented the nation before God. As went the priest, so went the nation and God always held spiritual leadership responsible.

It is important to note that it was possible for a/the priest to transgress through ignorance. Adam Clarke's Commentary comments on this point:

Hence, several critics understand this passage in this way, and translate it thus: If the anointed priest shall lead the people to sin; or, literally, if the anointed priest shall sin to the sin of the people; that is, so as to cause the people to transgress, the shepherd going astray, and the sheep following after him.

Matthew Henry's Commentary also comments on this point:

Though his ignorance was of all others least excusable, yet he was allowed to bring his offering. His office did not so far excuse his offence as that it should be forgiven him without a sacrifice; yet it did not so far aggravate it but that it should be forgiven him when he did bring his sacrifice.

Paul's comment to the Romans makes this point quite clear.

Romans 2:21

"You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?"

A YOUNG BULLOCK

This was seen as the highest form of animal offering, bearing the greatest value. Considering that the sins of the priest was of greater consequence, it was necessary for the choicest animal be offered.

THE CONGREGATION

Leviticus 4:13-14

¹³“And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which should not be done, and are guilty; ¹⁴when the sin, which they have sinned against it, is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation.”

A good example of how a congregation could sin as a whole is seen in 1 Samuel 14:31-35. This arose out of the peculiar circumstances, in which they were found where the people through their long and excessive fatigue in their combat with the Philistines, being faint, flew on the spoil, and took sheep, oxen, and calves and slew them on the ground, and ate with the blood.

A YOUNG BULLOCK

The young bullock was also offered for the entire congregation. Since the mass of the sin was greater thus the more costly offering was needed. It is also implied that for the entire congregation to have sinned then the priest was in neglect of his duty, thus the sacrifice was for him also. This is a point worthy of more concentration.

THE RULER

Leviticus 4:22-23

²²“When a ruler hath sinned, and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD his God concerning things which should not be done, and is guilty; ²³or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge; he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish:

The ruler was ‘an exalted one’ (Strong’s OT 5387) namely the king or possibly even the head’s of the tribes (Numb 1:4-16).

A MALE GOAT

It is mentioned that the ‘male’ goat signifies authority; and the fact that it was not a bullock, indicates that the bearing of the sin was not as serious, had it been committed by the religious ruler.

THE COMMON PEOPLE

Leviticus 4:27-28

²⁷“And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty; ²⁸or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned.

A FEMALE GOAT

The ‘female’ goat is thought to represent the fact that the ‘ruler’ was the figure of authority as opposed to the female. Therefore the ‘male’ was offered by the ruler and the ‘female’ by all other common people.

THE BLOOD

SPRINKLED IN FRONT OF THE VEIL

SEVEN TIMES

Leviticus 4:6

The priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil of the sanctuary.

The number ‘seven’ is what is called among the Hebrews a number of perfection; and it is often used to denote the completion, accomplishment, fullness or perfection of a thing, since this period contained the whole course of that time in which God created the world, and appointed the day of rest. As this act of consecration lasted seven days, it signified a perfect consecration and intimated to the priest that his whole body and soul, his time and talents, should be devoted to the service of God and his people.

The sprinkling of the blood toward the veil anticipated the torn veil of (Matt. 27:51 & Mark 15:38). The veil in the Temple was an exquisite masterpiece and enormous in size, measuring sixty feet in height and thirty-two feet in width. Rabbinical writings claim that it was four inches thick and so tightly woven that two teams of oxen, pulling in opposite directions, could not tear it apart. Yet, at the very moment that our Lord died on the Cross, that veil was miraculously torn from top to bottom. Scripture declares the typology of the veil: un-torn, it represented Jesus Christ in the flesh (Heb. 10:20) torn, the veil signified that a way was now open into God's presence for all who would who relied solely on His work (Heb. 10:19).

The number seven is the stamp of the covenant; the covenant relation, which sin had loosened, might be restored. The sprinkling of Christ's blood in front of the veil tore the veil and restored and secured God's relationship with His people.

ON THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR

Leviticus 4:7

"And the priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of meeting;"

The priest dipped his finger into the basin of blood, this time to put the blood on the horns of the altar of incense. The golden altar of incense had a specific and a general meaning; specifically, it portrayed Christ's twofold ministry in heaven -intercession (Heb 7:25) and advocacy (1 John 2:1-2). Generally, it stood for prayer, the horns being symbols of power. Together, the altar and its horns indicated the power of prayer and worship.

POURED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE ALTAR

Leviticus 4:7

"...and he shall pour the remaining blood of the bull at the base of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting."

Coming out from the Holy Place, the priest returned to the brazen altar, still carrying his basin with the blood. At the bottom of the altar he had to pour out what blood remained. Here we have the claims of individual conscience fully answered; for the brazen altar was the place of individual approach. It was the place where God met the sinner. Here we have the principle of (1 John 1:7) as the concept behind (1 John 1:9) namely, that the blood of Christ is the basis for restoration.

THE BODY

TAKEN OUTSIDE THE CAMP

Leviticus 4:12

"...the whole bull he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned."

The first thing that I see here is how our souls are preserved while the flesh in its sin is destroyed and done away with. The blood, which is the life of the animal, was presented before God as incense while the abomination of sin which the flesh of the animal carried, is burned to ashes outside the camp, never to be seen or heard of again. Jesus made the way for our souls to be preserved while sin was still punished. By the laying on of hands the animal was charged with the sin of the offerer and became unclean was carried out of the Lord's sight; its offensiveness removed.

This is the perfect picture of the sacrifice of Christ spoken of in Hebrews 13:11-13:

¹¹*"For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp.*

¹²*Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. ¹³Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.*

Although the flesh of the sacrifice bore the sins of the offerer, it was still associated with the remains of a sacrifice, which was a holy thing. So it was to be burned in a 'clean place' as opposed to an 'unclean place' (Lev 14:40).

Matthew Henry's Commentary explains that the burning of the flesh outside the camp was very significant:

(1.) *Of the duty of repentance, which is the putting away of sin as a detestable thing, which our soul hates. True penitents say to their idols, "Get you hence; what have we to do any more with idols?" The sin-offering is called sin. What they did to that we must do to our sins; the body of sin must be destroyed, [Rom 6:6](#).*

(2.) *Of the privilege of remission. When God pardons sin he quite abolishes it, casts it behind his back. The iniquity of Judah shall be sought for and not found. The apostle takes particular notice of this ceremony, and applies it to Christ ([Heb 13:11-13](#)), who suffered without the gate, in the place of a skull, where the ashes of dead men, as those of the altar, were poured out.*

THE VESSEL

There is one other thing that I would like to note about the sin offering which is found in Leviticus 6:28.

But the earthen vessel in which it is boiled shall be broken. And if it is boiled in a bronze pot, it shall be both scoured and rinsed in water.

What we have here is the holy offering of Christ being offered in an earthly vessel. I've noted to valid interpretation here:

1. So the earthen vessel which carried that holy blood of our Lord's precious sacrifice will be broken and cleansed (scoured) and made new lest any of the most holy flesh should adhere to the vessel, and be desecrated by its being used in the preparation of common food or for other earthly purposes.
2. This intimated that the defilement was not wholly taken away by the offering, but did rather cleave to it, such was the weakness and deficiency of those sacrifices; but the blood of Christ thoroughly cleanses from all sin, and after it there needs no cleansing.

I got thinking about the first point in relation to myself; although I doubt it has any real place in representing this passage. I see that it is necessary for us as Christians to be thoroughly cleaned by God. Once we have come to God and asked for forgiveness we (the earthen vessel) need to be scrubbed clean and/or broken into pieces to prevent becoming defiled by fleshly things; to keep as holy vessels. The more we are scoured and broken the less the 'things of the flesh' will stick to us. That's my experience anyway.

SUMMARY

This was an offering of expiating from sin. It was the offerers' sin that caused the death of the victim. In the case of Christ, it was our sin laid upon Him, the holy and unblemished victim, which allowed us to become free from sin.

The blood of the sacrifice was taken into the holy place by the priest and sprinkled beneath the veil. It was then carried out to the altar and poured at the bottom. This is a representation of Christ, as our High Priest, taking His shed blood into the holy place of God and tearing the veil of separation. This gift of forgiveness and communion with God was brought out to us by Jesus; and man must travel on His bloodstained way from without, to within, to meet God. We meet Christ at Calvary on the cross, where he poured out his life as an offering for sin. Then we proceed on to the golden altar, the place of his intercession, and on to the veil now torn from top to bottom, giving us access into the presence of the living eternal God. Here we have a perfect standing before Him clothed in the one who was without defect or blemish, His right standing imputed to us.

THE TRESSPASS OFFERING

Leviticus 5:1-9

While the trespass offering was propitiatory in its character, it differed from the sin offering. The Sin offering made atonement for the person of the offender; the trespass offering only atoned for one special offence. In fact the trespass offering can be seen as representing a ransom for some special wrong while the sin offering symbolized general redemption.

The description of the trespass offering is found in chapter 5:1 - 6:7. The trespass offering was another way of dealing with sin committed unintentionally. If the sin was against God like forgetting to pay a tithe, a ram with no defects had to be sacrificed. If the sin was against another person, not only did the ram have to be sacrificed, but those harmed by the sin had to be compensated for their loss, by adding one fifth as a penalty.

Even though Christ's death has made the trespass offering unnecessary, we still need to make things right with those we hurt. One of the notable differences between the sin offering and the trespass offering was that this restitution had to be paid. Of course the trespass offering was a part of the sin offering. Sin coming from a falling short of God's standard and trespassing is stepping or slipping over the mark, that line between right and wrong.

First let us look at the examples God has given us of these trespasses and see how they apply to us today as Christians.

THE SIN OF SILENCE

Leviticus 5:1

¹ 'If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter—if he does not tell it, he bears guilt.

This relates to taking an oath in a court of law. God demanded that those who break the law should be judged. This was the punishment of the man committing a crime, and thereby protecting the innocent, and also for keeping crime and lawlessness in check. In the light of this divine command, any person withholding evidence when it is demanded in the name of justice becomes a participant in the crime. In law it is called aiding and abetting and is punishable and is seen as a crime in itself.

We have two examples of this law, one from the Old Testament, the other from the New Testament.

OLD TESTAMENT

When Joshua destroyed the city of Jericho and then moved on to Ai where the Israelites were defeated. The reason was that there was sin in the camp, Achan had taken some of the spoils of the battle at Jericho which should have been dedicated to the Lord. When it was discovered Achan and all his family were stoned to death. To many it seems unfair that the family should die for the sin of the father. The inference is that the family was aware of the sin and had not made it known. So when by the process of elimination Achan's sin was discovered, the family was a participant in the sin by their silence. (Joshua 7).

NEW TESTAMENT

The second example is seen in Matthew 26:62-63. It reveals Jesus standing before the high priest as false witnesses were making all sorts of accusations against him, with Jesus giving no response. The high priest then said to him "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God". If at that moment Jesus had not answered, He would have committed a sin, become a sinner, and failed to become mans redeemer. Jesus answered "yes it is as you say". He did not aid and abet the false testimony.

THE SIN OF DEFILEMENT

Leviticus 5:2-3

² 'Or if a person touches any unclean thing, whether it is the carcass of an unclean beast, or the carcass of unclean livestock, or the carcass of unclean creeping things, and he is unaware of it, he also shall be unclean and guilty. ³ Or if he touches human uncleanness—whatever uncleanness with which a man may be defiled, and he is unaware of it—when he realizes it, then he shall be guilty.

This at first may seem a very harsh rule but yet there were contagious diseases that were well known that could wipe out a whole community. Hundreds of years later in Europe the plague caused wide spread panic for they were without modern drugs or medical understanding. By these simple rules God is protecting the health of the community by cutting off a source of contamination and isolating any possible sickness. The priests now became the environment health officers of Israel. People who had come into contact with a contagious disease were thereby quarantined until they came before the priests to present their offering. From the spiritual perspective how much more do we need to employ these simple safeguards to protect ourselves as Israel protected itself. We should take care in what we handle, what we allow our hearts, mind and eyes to handle. When we see something unclean or unwholesome even if by some accident, there is the need to be cleansed.

THE SIN OF SWEARING RASHLY

Leviticus 5:4

⁴ 'Or if a person swears, speaking thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, whatever it is that a man may pronounce by an oath, and he is unaware of it—when he realizes it, then he shall be guilty in any of these matters.

This time the swearing has nothing to do with bad language or the taking of an oath in a court of law but is related to the making of promises or entering into a contract or the making of vows. There would seem on reading the verse to be an injustice. It is easy to understand that if a man promises to do some good thing but does not do it he is in the wrong, but if a man vows to do some evil act, and repents of the intention and does not do it he is still guilty. This rule places the emphasis on the oath not on good or evil. It is to regulate our speech and cause us to consider the things we say lest our speech lead us into sin.

Many people are perplexed about the story of Jephthah and cannot accept that he offered his daughter as a human sacrifice. People will say that she was made to live a life of singleness; their reasoning is that God did not permit human sacrifice. Yet neither does God allow his name to be taken in vain. Judges 11:30 tells us "And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD 'If you give the Ammonites into my hands, whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the LORD'S, and I will sacrifice as a burnt offering. A clearer understanding may be gained by reading Numbers chapter 30. Humbleness and gentleness become the safer paths for life. Letting our yes be yes and our no be no. It means saying yes or no without the addition of oaths or promises which become committals that bind. God binds the man who binds himself by an oath (Matthew 5:33-37).

THE SIN OF DISHONESTY

Leviticus 5:15-16

¹⁵ 'If a person commits a trespass, and sins unintentionally in regard to the holy things of the LORD, then he shall bring to the LORD as his trespass offering a ram without blemish from the flocks, with your valuation in shekels of silver according to the shekel of the sanctuary, as a trespass offering. ¹⁶ And he shall make restitution for the harm that he has done in regard to the holy thing, and shall add one-fifth to it and give it to the priest. So the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him.

Dishonesty can be against God or against man, both this sin and the following one of ignorance are against God. The question can be asked is it possible to rob God. The question was certainly in peoples minds in the time of Malachi (Mal.3:8-12), when charged the people answered how have we robbed you. It is to be remembered that everything belongs to God, and man belongs to Him too, He is the Creator, the sustainer of all things. Everything is under His ownership. Psalm 24:1 "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;" God claims the first fruit of the harvest (Lev.23:10-14), he has claim to a tithe of all man possesses including time, energy and service, as well as possessions (Lev.27:30-32). When Joshua took possession of the promised land God claimed the first city Jericho which was dedicated to him by fire (Joshua 6). In the New Testament his claim on us is unchanged, if any thing because we have received more we should be willing and able to give more. To withhold is to rob God "will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask How do we rob you. In tithes and offerings". It may be unintentional, but that does not alter the responsibility. God is robbed in our defective generosity, giving to other things before tithing in the local church, Malachi 3:10 "bring the whole tithe into the store house". God is robbed in the lack of responsibility toward Christian ministry, for he says "that a labourer is worthy of his hire". God is robbed in our failure to maintain his work because of a lack of support both practically and financially. If we are not supporting God's church by our commitment to be present when possible, to pray for the ministries, to support the program of the church or by personal invitations to others, God is robbed. God is robbed when our times of worship and our times in the word of God are neglected. Are we honest with our time, our possessions, our abilities, our privileges, our friends? This dishonesty in holy things is a trespass for which God requires amends and restoration.

THE SIN OF IGNORANCE

Lev 5:17

17 "If a person sins, and commits any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD, though he does not know it, yet he is guilty and shall bear his iniquity.

This would seem to be another injustice, but on consideration, we realise that it is not so unfair. The natural man reasons that if he is ignorant, how can he be held responsible? The question is why are we ignorant? Is the claim of ignorance just? Much of what we claim to be ignorance is willful, and therefore is sin. Think about the motorist; the road rules are provided as a manual of the rules and conduct expected by society of the motorist. If he does not bother to read it, can he claim ignorance? The law says no, in fact he would not even pass his driving test. Yet becoming a parent, being a friend, or being a son or daughter requires no test but there is a 'makers' manual of what conduct is acceptable and what rules there are in relationships with other people, this manual of life is called the bible. Perhaps it would be good if we were to wear the L plates of humility and willingness to learn until we knew what God expects of us. If a man was able to find out but does not, he is guilty. Carelessness or needless forgetfulness is also a sin. This is not ignorance; it is the sin of ignorance.

The following trespasses are not only against God but also against man and are found in Leviticus 6: 2-3 the New King James Version reads "If a person sins and commits a trespass against the Lord by lying to his neighbour about what was delivered to him for safe keeping, or about a pledge, or about a robbery, or if he has extorted from his neighbour, or if he has found what was lost and lies concerning it, and swears falsely - in any one of these things that a man may do in which he sins.

THE SIN OF FAILURE TO TRUST

If one accepts the property of another to look after or to keep safe must do that which he has promised to do taking greater care than if the entrusted item were his own. The failure is not the deliberate wrong action but the unintentional. This could also encompass a thing that has been borrowed for a particular time or task. In 2 Kings 6:5 "As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron axe-head fell into the water. Oh, my lord he cried out it was borrowed". The concern was that the axe was borrowed it was not his. Man must be concerned about borrowed goods, and even more concerned about entrusted goods. Just think for a moment, have you ever gone along your book shelf and thought I know I borrowed that book from some one I must return it but leave it there or even worse you can't even remember from whom the book was borrowed in the first place. Perhaps someone has told us something in confidence, they have entrusted us with information to keep safe or private, if we gossip about that information the trust is broken. We must be careful not to be light-hearted or careless in our approach to things left in our charge, for which we have accepted responsibility. The lie is not keeping the item safe.

THE SIN OF PARTNERSHIP

Sin in partnership "or about a pledge" the idea given here is the sense of a partnership, of a contract in a business that makes those involved partners in some project. The Lord is showing his concern about our everyday behaviour as people who are in the world but not a part of it. How we relate to other people, is the central to our Christian profession. Fairness is doing our fair share, not acting as top dog and taking the easiest or glamour jobs for ourselves, and leaving others to do the dirty or the mundane tasks. This applies in business, in the home, in the church, in our social life, in fact everywhere. The lie is not playing fair.

THE SIN OF TAKING BY VIOLENCE

We are not thinking here of robbery with violence or mugging someone for the Christian should not even think of such a thing. Every man has a will, a right to think He is entitled to make his own decisions and conduct himself as his conscience permits. This freewill is as much a part of a man's belongings as his money, his house or any of his other possessions. There are the strong-willed, determined individuals who insist on having their own way and exercising their authority, irrespective of the feelings of the other person or whether they agree. They want their way not considering whether the conscience of others is hurt or offended. This is taking the other person's mind or personality from him by violence. The lie is that it is all right for anyone in any position to abuse their authority and even to justify it. As Christians we must learn to respect the other person's rights and privileges. We may seek to persuade a person to change his point of view, but never force him, sometimes we just have to agree to disagree.

THE SIN OF DECEPTION

This means to obtain under false pretences. There are two stories, one from the Old Testament and one from the new, which are worth recounting.

OLD TESTAMENT

First let us look at Joshua 9 where the Gibeonites carried out an enormous yet cunning deception. They feared for their lives and so tricked the Israelites into a treaty so that they would not be attacked. They obtained what they wanted under false pretences but became servants to the Israelites they were not destroyed because they did not lie about their deception Verses 24 & 25.

NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament example is that of Ananias and Sapphira from Acts 5:1-11. A man called Joseph from Cyprus sold some land and gave all the money to the apostles, they called him Barnabas which means the son of encouragement and Barnabas became a man of standing and position in the Christian community. Ananias and Sapphira his wife conspired to gain such standing but kept some of the money back for themselves. They came, laid the money at the apostles' feet to show that they were wholehearted for God, but they were only wholehearted for the recognition the gift would bring them. When questioned they lied to the Holy Spirit and it cost them their lives.

Today children deceive their parents and teachers, employees their employers by trying to get recognition or credit for something they had not done. Even Christians embellish the facts to make things sound more attractive or their part greater, there are even some who try to deceive God. In the sight of God these are trespasses upon each other for which we are held responsible and he requires we make amends.

THE SIN OF KEEPING THINGS FOUND

You have probably heard the children's saying "finder's keeper's loser's weepers" yet this is a worldly attitude that is prevalent, selfish and wrong. It is dishonest, as Christians we should do all that is within our power to discover the owner of anything we find, and see that it is returned. The real sin here is not discovering or picking up the item but the lie that pretends that we are the owner.

Think of finding some money on the street or when we find that after leaving a shop that the shop assistant has given us too much change. The Lord requires absolute honesty. Throughout there is the reminder that if we take care of the little things of our conduct, then the bigger things are easier taken care of, also there is that truth that the Lord does not close his eyes to the little things which we treat so carelessly.

THE OFFERING

The trespass offering consisted of a ram, which was valued by the priest according to the sanctuary shekel. The victim was slain on the northern side of the altar and the blood of the victim was sprinkled against the side of the altar with the remainder being poured out at its base. The priest then burnt the fat of the animal on the bronze altar while the rest of the animal was given to the priest as with the sin offering. So that no one was excluded if a person was unable to afford a ram then the following were accepted by the priest. two doves or pigeons but if that were not affordable then fine flour was accepted by the priest. Now the procedure was different if the trespass was against a man.

The order of things when the trespass was against God was :-

1. SACRIFICE - substitution, atonement.
2. PRINCIPAL - restitution, restoration of the wrong.
3. A FIFTH MORE - recompense added

Here the thought of the atoning sacrifice was predominant.

The order when the trespass was against a fellow-man changed in this way

1. RESTITUTION - the principal came first.
2. RECOMPENSE - the fifth was added as compensation.

3. SACRIFICE - atonement for the sin.

The thought of restitution to the injured party was predominant. But mere restitution would not suffice; there must also be atonement for his sin against the Lord. Jesus re-enforced the law and the order of restitution. In Matthew 5: 23-24 it shows that restitution came first and then the altar. Our communion with God is broken until restitution is made; we must get it right with our fellow-man first and why not add a gift by way of compensation to the person.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that the reason that people came to the tabernacle was different but fell into five main categories these we dealt with as the offerings.

THE SIN OFFERING

The person comes seeking redemption or salvation, to be right with God. The Israelites would bring a sin offering, seeking to atone for the sin. Today we come to Jesus for no one can come to the Father except through Jesus. No one can know God as Father if they have not received Jesus as their personal saviour. John 1:12 -13 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God -- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

THE BURNT OFFERING

The person would come seeking to consecrate himself to God for Him to use in the Kingdom. This speaks of God accepting us to do his will just as his son Jesus had done before us. The Israelites would bring a burnt offering, seeking his acceptance in their communion with God. Rom 12:1 - 2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

THE GRAIN OFFERING

The person wants to consecrate his gifts to God in recognition that all that he is belongs to God. The grain or meal offering was offered voluntarily as a memorial that the whole belongs to God. 1 John 4:7-8 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. God is love therefore our consecrated gifts are motivated by love 1 Cor 13:1 - 3 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

THE TRESPASS OFFERING

The person coming to put right some specific wrong-doing would offer a trespass offering to restore his relationship with God. If this wrong was against another person then restitution would be made before the offering was made. Mat 5:23 - 26 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

THE PEACE OFFERING

The person coming to God out of the communion that exists to enjoy fellowship with God would come with a peace offering. These offerings would be of three types, thanks-giving, to gain a specific blessing, or to thankfully seek a continuance of His blessing. Psa 42:1 - 2 As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? Eph 5:18 - 20 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.