

# The Thanksgiving Offering

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] But if we could, this evening with the Lord's help, and for a short while, if we could turn to Leviticus chapter 7.

Just a few chapters on from where we read. Leviticus chapter 7, and we'll read at verse 11. Leviticus chapter 7 and verse 11.

And this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings that one may offer to the Lord. If he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the thanksgiving sacrifice unleavened loaves mixed with oil, unleavened wafers smeared with oil, and loaves of fine flour well mixed with oil.

The morning.

Note that everything in the tabernacle, it points us forward to the person of Jesus Christ.

[ 1 : 5 7 ] Because as we've said, and as John reminds us in his gospel, Jesus is the word who became flesh. Jesus is the word who tabernacled among us so that we might behold his glory.

Therefore, the tabernacle in the Old Testament, it points us to the person of Jesus, our tabernacle. But if the tabernacle points us to the person of Jesus, our tabernacle, then the book of Leviticus, with all the animal sacrifices and the religious rituals and the purity laws, it points us to the work of Jesus Christ.

So the tabernacle speaks of the person. The book of Leviticus speaks of the work of Jesus Christ. In fact, it's said that if you understand the book of Leviticus, then you'll understand the work of Jesus Christ in our salvation.

Because the book of Leviticus, in many ways, it's a manual on how to worship God. Because the thing about the Lord is he can't be worshipped any old way.

As one of the Puritans put it, worship is not that which gratifies the human heart. Worship is what God delights in.

[ 3 : 1 0 ] Therefore, worship is not about what we want, or what we like, or what sounds good to us. Worship is about what God wants, and what God desires, and what God delights in.

But more than being a manual on how to worship a holy God, the book of Leviticus is also about how to live a holy life. And I say that because when you read through the book of Leviticus, the word holiness, and the need for holiness, it's repeated over 150 times in this book.

And so the book of Leviticus, you could say, it's a manual on how to worship a holy God, and how to live a holy life. And so how do you? How do you worship a holy God, and how do you live a holy life?

And the book of Leviticus says to us, only through sacrifice. That's the only way to worship a holy God, and it's the only way to live a holy life. Because as the book reminds us very, very clearly, without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin.

Therefore, it's only by the shedding of blood, and by the substitutionary sacrifice of another, that we can worship a holy God, and live a holy life.

[ 4 : 26 ] And of course, every sacrifice, and every offering that's mentioned in Leviticus, as we said, it all points us forward to the work of Jesus Christ. And when you read through the opening first five chapters, it's a very interesting reading.

We're told in chapter one about the burnt offering, then the grain offering, then the peace offering, as we read in chapter three, then the sin offering, and the trespass offering. And all these different offerings, they all had a purpose in how to worship a holy God, and how to live a holy life.

But what we see in this chapter, when we come to chapter seven, and particularly in these verses, verses 11 to 15, is that there were additional instructions given about the peace offering.

And we're told that there were three types of peace offering. There was the vow offering, which was offered when we make a promise to God. There was the freewill offering, which was offered on the anniversary of a great occasion.

But there was also the thanksgiving offering, and that's what we read in verses 11 to 15. And as it's harvest thanksgiving, I'd like us just to consider this offering together, the thanksgiving offering.

[ 5 : 39 ] The thanksgiving offering. And I want us to consider the thanksgiving offering, because the thanksgiving offering was unique. And it was unique in two ways.

Firstly, because the thanksgiving offering was, it wasn't mandatory. It was optional. You didn't have to give a thanksgiving offering, because, well, it's not thanksgiving if it's demanded from you.

It's only thanksgiving if it's desired. Therefore, we must have a desire to give thanks to God. And thanksgiving, as you know it, it must be a response to God's goodness to us.

In fact, the Hebrew word for thanksgiving is derived from the Hebrew word to praise. And so thanksgiving, it's a form of praise.

It's a form of worship. But it's not thanksgiving if it's demanded. It's only thanksgiving if it's desired from us. And secondly, what was unique about the thanksgiving offering was that the substitutionary sacrifice of this thanksgiving offering, it was divided into three portions.

[ 6 : 48 ] There was a portion for the Lord, a portion for the priest, and a portion for the worshipper. And I just want us to consider these three portions this evening, what each person or each portion was given.

I want us to see these three portions of the thanksgiving offering. And I want us to consider it just under three headings. So there was a portion for the master, a portion for the mediator, and a portion for the meal.

A portion for the master, a portion for the mediator, and a portion for the meal. So we look first of all at the portion for the master. There was a portion for the master.

See that in verse 11. We're told, And so when we consider the thanksgiving offering, it seems that because it's closely related to the peace offerings, it would have been offered in a very similar way.

And that's why we read earlier from Leviticus chapter 3. Because it seems that when a worshipper desired to make an offering of thanksgiving to the Lord, they would come, as you can see, they would come to the outer gate, and they would come with their live animal, and they would enter into the tabernacle courtyard.

[ 8 : 29 ] They would enter through the outer gate into the tabernacle courtyard. And they would come with their substitutionary sacrifice. And the sacrifice was either an ox, or a sheep, or a goat, depending on how wealthy you were.

And that's what we were reading about in chapter 3. There were three types of peace offering. Because if the worshipper was wealthy, or from an upper class, you could say, they would offer an ox to the Lord.

If they were of more of a middle class, they would offer a sheep to the Lord. If they were of a lower class, a lower working class, they would offer a goat to the Lord. And what's remarkable is that no one was restricted from coming before the Lord in worship because of their wealth.

Instead, the Lord had graciously made provision for anyone and everyone to approach Him if they desired to make an offering of thanksgiving to the Lord.

And so the worshipper, they would bring their offering of the substitutionary sacrifice, they would bring it through the outer gate into the tabernacle courtyard. And once inside the tabernacle courtyard, as we read, they were to lay their hand upon the head of the animal.

[ 9 : 41 ] And they were to do that to show identification, but also substitution. And it's at that point that the priest would then come and kill the animal.

He would slit the animal's throat and catch all the blood in one of the bronze basins that were usually sitting beside the bronze altar. But you know, for a worshipper coming with this live animal and seeing that this would be their substitute, once the priest slit the throat of the animal, they would see the life of the animal just draining away before their eyes.

And as it's reminded for us in the book of Leviticus, the life is in the blood. And it's the blood that makes the atonement for the soul. But once the priest received the blood in this bronze basin, the priest would then go and sprinkle the blood against the sides, the four sides of the bronze altar.

And the animal sacrifice, it would then be cut into pieces by the priests who were in many ways butchers, you could say, because the tabernacle courtyard, as we've said this in our study of the tabernacle, the tabernacle courtyard was more like a slaughterhouse than a sanctuary.

You know, there was this amount of, there was death and blood and burning flesh and you know, it wouldn't have been the nicest place to be but it was always this reminder without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin.

[ 11 : 12 ] It was a vivid reminder of what needs to take place in order to receive forgiveness because, well, sacrifice was the means of a holy God having mercy.

But once the blood of the sacrifice, once it was drained into the basin and sprinkled around the sides of the altar, the animal carcass was then cut in pieces and this is what we read from chapter 3.

We read that the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them which is on the loins and the lobe of the liver which you shall remove with the kidneys shall be offered up on the altar to the Lord as a pleasing aroma.

And, you know, I admit that this is not the nicest thought after just eating your dinner. But, you know, what we see here is that the portion for the master, the portion of the thanksgiving offering which the Lord received, it was to be the choicest parts.

It was the fatty parts of the animal. All the choicest parts were to be offered to the Lord on the altar of sacrifice. And it was to be an offering, as we read, an offering made by fire of sweet savour to the Lord.

[ 12 : 25 ] It was to be a pleasing aroma to the Lord. And it was a pleasing aroma because it was the best part, the choicest part of the sacrifice that was offered as the offering of thanksgiving to the Lord.

But in addition to the best, fatty, choicest parts of the animal offered to the Lord, the worshipper would also have to offer, as it says here in verse 12, it says it would have to offer unleavened loaves mixed with oil, unleavened wafer smeared with oil, and loaves of fine flour well mixed with oil.

And you know, what we're to understand is that this offering of thanksgiving was to be given out of a desire, not out of demand. It was to be given out of a desire to express thankfulness for the Lord's goodness.

Because what the portion for the Master teaches us is that the best and the choicest part of our thanksgiving, it belongs to the Lord.

It belongs to the Lord. The Lord was to receive the best part of the thanksgiving offering because the Lord is to receive our best. And you know, my friend, our thanksgiving offering to the Lord, it's not to be given annually, just on Harvest Thanksgiving Day.

[ 13 : 52 ] It's to be given daily. Our offering of thanksgiving to the Lord is to be given daily because we're to give our best to the Lord as an expression of our thankfulness to the Lord's goodness and kindness towards us.

We're to offer our Master our best. We're to give the Lord the best of everything. And that includes the best of our day. We're to give it to the Lord.

We're to give the best of our day to the Lord in prayer and even reading the Bible. We're to give the Lord the best of our week because the Master's portion of our week is the Lord's day.

The Master's portion of our week is the Lord's day. And we're to give the Lord's day wholly to the Lord and spend it focused upon His kingdom and His word. We're to give the best of our energy and even our efforts to the Lord because there should be no excuse of laziness or apathy with the Lord's work.

We should give the best of our time to the Lord and not waste it on trivial matters that don't prepare us or others for eternity. In fact, you could say that Paul writes, when Paul writes to the Romans, he says that we're to give ourselves to the Lord.

[ 15 : 09 ] Give your whole self. When Paul wrote to the church in Rome, he said that we are to be the sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord. Paul wrote in Romans chapter 12, verse 1, I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

My friend, as a portion for the Master, we're to give our best in our offering of thanksgiving to the Lord. But why? Why should we give our best to the Lord?

Well, is it not because he has given us his best? Because he gave us his best son, his only son. He sent him to be our substitutionary sacrifice at Calvary.

the Lord has given us his best and as a loving response to his goodness and his faithfulness and his kindness towards us, he ought to receive our best.

So in offering our thanksgiving, there should be a portion for the Master. But there should also be a portion for the Mediator, which is what we see secondly.

[ 16 : 27 ] A portion for the Mediator. Look at verse 13. It says, with the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving, he shall bring his offering with loaves of leavened bread and from it he shall offer one loaf from each offering as a gift to the Lord.

It shall belong to the priest who throws the blood of the peace offerings. So when a portion for the Master had been offered in an act of thanksgiving to the Lord, another portion was offered to the Mediator given to the Mediator who was the priest.

Because it was the priest who acted as this Mediator between the worshipper, you, and the Lord in offering up this offering of thanksgiving to the Lord. Because when a worshipper brought their animal sacrifice through the outer gate into the tabernacle courtyard, as we said, they would lay their hand upon the animal for identification and substitution.

But it's at that point that the priest would then take over. they would take over as the Mediator between the worshipper and the Lord. And when the priest had slit the throat of the animal and drained its blood and butcher the animal, they would butcher it and prepare it for offering it on the altar.

And as we said, the portion of the animal for the Master, that was the fatty parts. The best parts, the choicest parts were offered to the Lord. But from the same animal, the priest who was the mediator between the worshipper and the Lord, they would receive the breast of the animal and the shoulder of the animal.

[ 18 : 05 ] And the breast and the shoulder of the Thanksgiving offering would be the portion for the mediator. And these portions, they were given specific names, they were called the wave breast and the heave shoulder.

The wave breast and the heave shoulder. I don't know why the power has gone off. The reason these portions of the animal were called the wave breast and the heave shoulder is because they weren't actually burned on the altar.

They were given back to the priest. Instead, the priest, he would take the breast of the animal and he would wave it, wave it back and forth in front of the altar.

Then he would take the shoulder of the animal and heave it upwards and downwards before the altar. And the purpose of waving the wave breast forwards and backwards and heaving the heave shoulder upwards and downwards was to show that they were offered to the Lord but the Lord was returning them to the mediator.

He was returning them to the priest. They were offered to the master but they were returned as a gift to the mediator. And as a consequence, the priest and his family, they were permitted to eat this portion together.

[ 19 : 18 ] In fact, that's how the priesthood survived. That's how the Lord provided for the priesthood and his family. Because, as you know, when the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi, he set them apart from all the other tribes in Israel and they were to have no portion of land, they were not to have animals, they weren't to have anything to work the land or even to keep animals on the land.

Everything the priest had, everything the priest received was to come from the Lord. The portion for the mediator was to be received from the Lord when a worshipper gave their offering of thanksgiving to the Lord.

Therefore, the portion for the mediator was to ensure that the Lord's servants, you could say, were reimbursed for their services. They were to receive a portion from what was offered to the Lord in an act of thanksgiving.

And, you know, this is actually where we get the biblical principle of providing for the ministry of God's word. When we give our monetary offering of thanksgiving to the Lord as we come to worship, you could say a portion is used to provide for the minister and the ministering of God's word.

And that's what Paul meant when he said that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. Those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. Meaning that we must support the work of the gospel locally, nationally, and internationally.

[ 20 : 48 ] And we must do it financially, physically, and prayerfully. Because those who live, those who preach from the gospel should live from the gospel. But what's interesting is that the portion for the mediator, it was not only provided for the priest, it also brought pleasure for the priest.

Because he enabled the worshiper, the mediator, enabled the worshiper to make an offering of thanksgiving to the Lord. He not only, it not only provided for the priest, but there was also pleasure for the priest.

And you know, when we consider our great high priest and our mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, when we consider him, we ought to see that there's no mediator who rejoices more than him in seeing sinners being reconciled and offering thanksgiving to the Lord.

Because what the portion of the mediator ought to remind us of is that our mediator and great high priest Jesus Christ, he experiences pleasure and joy when we come to him in thanksgiving.

And as his people, this is the amazing thing, the Bible says that we are his portion. We are the portion of the mediator. We are his inheritance.

[ 22 : 16 ] And Jesus rejoices to receive his people as his portion. The Bible reminds us that it was for the joy that was set before him, that he endured the cross, all so that he could rejoice over his people.

And you know, my friend, that should be our greatest assurance and comfort tonight, that your salvation is sure in Jesus Christ, all because it was a joy for him to endure the cross on your behalf.

It was a joy for him knowing that he would rejoice over you. And you know, you may be blinded by doubts or crippled by fears or uncertain about your assurance as a Christian.

But you know, when you come to know Jesus as your great high priest and mediator, you not only rejoice in him, the wonderful thing is he rejoices in you.

He rejoices in you and he rejoices in you because you are his inheritance. You are his portion. You are the portion for the mediator.

[ 23 : 23 ] You are the father's love gift given to the son. And you're the gift because he was willing to be sacrificed on your behalf.

You're the portion for the mediator. But what we see lastly is a portion for the meal. So there's a portion for the master, a portion for the mediator and a portion for the meal.

A portion for the meal. Look at verse 15. And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten on the day of his offering.

He shall not leave any of it until the morning. We said earlier that what was unique about the thanksgiving offering was that it was divided into three portions. There was a portion for the master in which the Lord received the best and the choicest parts of the offering.

There was the portion for the mediator in which the priest received a portion for his works of service. And then the third portion of the thanksgiving offering was a portion for the thanksgiving meal.

[ 24 : 31 ] And this is what made the thanksgiving offering unique because the worshipper received back a portion of the offering that they had given. Although the worshipper would have come with this offering of thanksgiving to the Lord what was unique about this offering was that the Lord allowed the worshipper to enjoy a portion of the offering themselves.

And this was unique because no other offering was this allowed to happen. Where there was a portion of the offering returned to the worshipper and that portion that was returned to the worshipper it was then taken home and it was eaten together as a joyful meal a thanksgiving meal with family and friends.

it was a thanksgiving meal. And as you know we don't have thanksgiving meals on harvest thanksgiving in comparison to our American neighbours who make a big thing of thanksgiving where it's a public holiday and families come home and they have a massive meal together.

You know I would actually say that as an island and even as a nation we hardly even acknowledge our thanksgiving to the Lord. It's not really on people's minds anymore to give thanksgiving to the Lord.

Our cupboards are full but our thanksgiving is empty. And even as Reverend William McLeod mentioned last night he often says it when the cupboards were empty the churches were full but now that the cupboards are full the churches are empty.

[ 26 : 10 ] Because in the day and age that we live in we're so we see it all around us we're so selfish we're so self-obsessed we're so self-absorbed we have so much on our shelves and in our fridges that we've lost sight of who we should give thanks to and why we should give thanks.

We've lost sight of it all. But you know what's interesting about our American neighbours is that they traced their thanksgiving way back to the 17th century to 1621 when there was English Puritans who had travelled to the United States they experienced a good harvest in 1621 and they sought because of it they sought to give thanks to the Lord for his goodness to them and they had a harvest thanksgiving meal and from then on it was held annually this thanksgiving meal on the fourth Thursday in November which is today.

But as you know when we consider the offering of thanksgiving when we consider what's written here in Leviticus 7 we see that the first thanksgiving meal was dated long before 1621 because the portion for the meal which the worshipper who came to the tabernacle the portion that they received back from the Lord and took home for their thanksgiving meal and eaten with their family and friends that portion was their thanksgiving meal but you know what's significant about the thanksgiving offering and with this I'll come to a close what's significant about the thanksgiving offering is that in Jewish tradition Jewish tradition stated that when the Christ would come all the sacrifices and offerings would be done away with except the thanksgiving offering every sacrifice and offering would be fulfilled by the

Christ except the offering of thanksgiving and that's what happened when Jesus Christ came into the world when he died upon the cross when he lived the perfect life and died what was the perfect death he fulfilled every sacrifice and every offering that's mentioned in the book of Leviticus he fulfilled it through his life and death but what's remarkable is that what remained was the thanksgiving offering despite fulfilling every substitutionary sacrifice and offering in the personal work of Jesus Christ it was Jesus himself who provided and instituted a thanksgiving meal for his people to rejoice in and enjoy you know we call it the Lord's Supper many other traditions call it the Eucharist and the Eucharist is the word for thanksgiving therefore the Eucharist or the Lord's

Supper it's a thanksgiving meal it's a thanksgiving meal provided by the Lord for his people and you know that's the portion that we receive from the Lord and as you know my friend the purpose of the Eucharist the purpose of the Lord's Supper and why we're to come to the Lord's table to enjoy the Lord's Supper it's all because we're to give thanks to God we're to give thanks to God for his victory through the Lord Jesus Christ we're to give thanks to God for the substitutionary sacrifice and death of Jesus Christ and you know that's why we often sing Psalm 116 as we approach the Lord's table because in Psalm 116 as we were singing earlier on it's the Christian's confession I love the Lord because my voice and prayers heeded here I while I live will call on him who bowed to me his ear but Psalm 116 it not only reminds us of the Christian's confession before the Lord

[ 30 : 19 ] Psalm 116 also reminds us of the Christian's commitment to the Lord because the psalmist he went on to say and we'll sing it in a moment he said I'll of salvation take the cup on God's name will I call I'll pay my vows now to the Lord before his people all and then the psalmist goes on just right near the end of the psalm he says thank offerings I to thee will give and on God's name will call I'll pay my vows now to the Lord before his people all and he's speaking about the thanksgiving meal that he's enjoying with the Lord's people this thanksgiving portion that the Lord has given to his people and so my friend this evening we've been reminded of the thanksgiving offering but it's not been demanded from you it's just desired of you and the Lord desires that you respond to his good and gracious gifts by continually offering up your thanksgiving to him because when you do we have this wonderful reminder here that there will be a portion for the master a portion for the mediator and a portion for the meal so this is the thanksgiving offering may the

Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray O Lord our gracious God we give thanks to thee for thy goodness to us we thank thee Lord for thy word thy word that is the only rule to direct us and Lord that thou wouldst direct our hearts and our minds and even our lives to be lives that sing of thy praise lives Lord that seek to live for thy glory and lives Lord that want to give thanks to thee for thy faithfulness to us for thy goodness towards us for thy love that is unchanging O Lord help us to be a people a people who are thankful thankful to the Lord O Lord bless us then we pray watch over us we ask not because we deserve anything from thee but solely Lord because the Lord one who is gracious to us go with us then we pray part us with thy blessing for we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake amen we'll bring our service to a conclusion by singing those words of

Psalm 116 Psalm 116 it's on page 396 in the Scottish Psalter Psalm 116 as we said the opening words are the confession of the Christian before the Lord and the words that we're singing in conclusion verses 11 to 19 they are the confession of commitment to the Lord I said when I was in my haste that all men liars be what shall I render to the Lord for all his gifts to me I'll of salvation take the cup on God's name will I call I'll pay my vows now to the Lord before his people all I'm going to sing on to the end of the psalm of Psalm 116 to God's praise I said when I was in my haste that all men liars be what shall I shall I enter to the

Lord for all his gifts to me I love salvation take the cup on Lord's name will like I like all I'll pay my vows now to the Lord before his people all here in what sight is his death I serve but Lord am I I serve but sure like hand made son my bands the distant time feet that

God offerings I to thee will give and on God's name will call I'll pay my vows now to the Lord before For his people all.

[ 35 : 53 ] Within the courts of God's own house. Within the midst of thee.

O city of Jerusalem. Praise to the Lord.

Give me. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The love of God the Father. And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Be with you all.

Now and forevermore. Amen.