

1. In the last lesson I stated my purpose for writing these studies. It can be summarized by the question, “I believe in Jesus, now what do I do?” They are designed to stimulate and motivate the Christian to a better (closer) relationship with God and to give a better understanding of what God asks and requires of us as believers. This question of, “now what do I do” directly applies to this lesson. I’ll come back to this issue in a moment.
  - a) Chapter 1 of Leviticus was all about “the burnt offering”. The giver of the animal is to identify themselves with that animal. It is symbolic of giving one self completely to God. It is similar to when a Christian makes that initial commitment to turn their life completely over to God and comprehend the fact that Jesus paid the price for the sins.
  - b) Following that burnt offering commitment, we now can ask the “I believe in Jesus, now what do I do” question. That is what Chapters 2-3 are all about. These chapters give word-pictures (through other types of sacrifices) as how we should live out our lives as believers in God. We’ll get into specifics in a moment.
2. First, let’s review a bit from the last lesson as to why all of these sacrifices are given in Leviticus:
  - a) The first several chapters of Leviticus are all about sacrifices being burnt up on an altar to God. Yes, these sacrifices were to be literally done as described here in Leviticus. Through the Old Testament, there are references to these offerings as described here. As one reads their way through the bible, one can have a better understanding of what is at stake when we read of these offerings.
  - b) While the historical context is important, so much more it is to understand how it applies to our lives today: The application has to do with “word-pictures”. The early chapters of Leviticus are full of word-pictures designed for us to visualize and contemplate. Our minds remember visual word-pictures better than facts and figures. God knows that and designed the bible to be full of word-pictures for us to remember. The sacrifices listed in the early chapters of Leviticus are prime examples of such word-pictures.
3. With all that stated, it is now time to talk about Chapters 2 and 3 of Leviticus.
  - a) Chapter 2 is about a “grain” offering. It is the only offering in Leviticus that does not involve blood or an animal sacrifice. We’ll discuss that in the lesson itself.
  - b) This grain offering has different names depending upon what English translation is used. The King James calls it the “meat offering”. The word “meat” in Old English refers to all food in general and not just meat as we think of it today. Other translations call this the “cereal” offering and others call it the “meal offering”. The NIV translation used here calls it the “grain” offering as one of the key ingredients is wheat grain.
  - c) The purpose of Chapter 2 can be summarized in a word: “commitment”. If Chapter 1 is about giving one’s life to God, Chapter 2 is symbolic of “sticking it out” with God. Many Christians give a regular part of their income to the church and that is an example of a regular commitment to God. The grain offering is symbolic of a regular commitment to God. In fact, throughout the Old Testament, this grain offering is usually combined with a burnt offering. It is like saying, “I give my all to God and I am going to keep on giving my all to God. This double-commitment was often expressed by offering a grain offering together with a burnt offering.
  - d) Chapter 3 begins the third offering in Leviticus. It is usually called the “peace offering”. It is symbolic of having peace of God. There are other names for this offering as well, again, depending upon which English translation is used. This offering is considered a celebration. It is like saying, “I’ve committed my life to you through a burnt offering and I vow to keep on committing my life to God through the grain offering. Now, I just want to enjoy my time with God and have the peace of God within me.”

4. The hard part about learning all of these offerings is some time from now, it will be easy to forget which is which. Learning these offerings as word-pictures will help these lessons stick in our long term memory.
  - a) For example, when we think of a burnt offering, we would remember the fact that is 100% burnt up. That is a great example of giving ones all to God.
  - b) Now in Chapter 2, we have this grain offering (also called the “meal” offering). Here is how to best remember this offering: It is the only offering where there is no blood. It is about giving of one’s substance. Grain was a form of income. Grain was a source of food. (The same way “bread” is a nickname for money in English.) It would be like taking some of our food supply, and burning it up because 1) we are grateful to God for supplying that food and 2) we are trusting God to supply us more of that food.
    - i) It might be best to associate this grain offering with our food. Usually before Christians eat a meal, we offer our gratitude to God. This grain offering is based on gratitude but expanded to include commitment. Part of that food is “put up in flames” to show our faith in trusting God to provide more food the next day.
  - c) Chapter 3 involves the next step of the relationship. It is the peace offering. We’re back to slaughtering bulls and sheep for this one. The key word is “peace”.
    - i) We have already made the commitment to give our “all” to God in Chapter 1.
    - ii) We make the commitment to give to God “regularly” in Chapter 2.
    - iii) In Chapter 3, we can now enjoy a close personal relationship with God as the price for our sins is done. Animal sacrifices are done again to remind ourselves that blood (death) is necessary as a price to have that relationship with God.
    - iv) Chapter 3 would be like us thinking, “Lord, I just want to talk to You. I just want to pour out what is on my heart right now. I don’t know what to do this situation, but I trust You have the answer. I want to make You part of my life. I know that I will live forever and that all of these problems are short-term. This offering is to help me have the eternal perspective and have the peace of God within me.”
  - d) OK, enough yapping, time to get back to the fire pit. ☺
    - i) Remember that all the offerings of the early chapters of Leviticus take place at a “barbeque pit” just inside the tabernacle. In the second half of the Book of Exodus, the Israelites set up the first place of central worship of God, called the Tabernacle. There was only one gated entrance. The gate lead to an outdoor area within this fenced area. The first thing one sees is a fire pit. The first few chapters of Leviticus describe different types of sacrifices that are made at this fire pit.
    - ii) Chapter 1 described the burnt offering. Chapter 2 begins the “grain” offering.
5. Verse 1: “When someone brings a grain offering to the LORD, his offering is to be of fine flour.
  - a) The NIV translation puts this whole chapter in quotes. It is because it is God speaking. It is as if Moses walked into the covered part the tabernacle with a pen and paper in hand, and just took dictation from God. Most of Leviticus is God speaking. It tells of the importance of this book with God being quoted directly.
  - b) As I’ve stated in the introduction, the “grain offering” is being described here. Note that all of Chapter 2 describes this grain offering.
  - c) The first thing it says about the grain offering is that it is to be of “fine flour”.
    - i) Let’s talk about what it literally means, and then describe the application: For those unfamiliar with cooking, flour often needs to be sifted of lumps. If one sees flour come out of a package, it often has clumps that are lumped together. A sifting process is needed to remove those lumps, so that the finished product is all fine and soft with no clumps or lumps as part of the flour.
    - ii) Also, when we think of flour, we think of white flour. This is about wheat flour, which was used in that day. The wheat grains are sifted over and over again, until it is a fine substance.

- d) What's the application? First, remember what the grain offering is all about: It is about our dedication of service to God. The burnt offering (Chapter 1) was about our commitment to give our "all" to God. The grain offering (Chapter 2) is the next step of regularly living our lives for God.
    - i) The idea of "sifted" wheat is to give our all to God and give our best to God. Giving fine sifted wheat is more valuable than lumpy wheat.
    - ii) Think about it this way: When a person is making a burnt offering (Chapter 1) to God there is no "preparation" involved. The bull or goat must be defect free, but there is no special preparation of the animal. It is just brought as-is to the altar.
    - iii) With this grain offering, there is lots of preparation prior to the offering. The word picture is when we approach God with our daily life there is preparation of our heart needed. In other words, when we first give our lives to God, we just "come". There is no change needed. Once we make that commitment, then we must follow through with our actions. Preparation is needed.
    - iv) Remember what we are doing with this "grain offering" is making a special type of food and giving it to God. It shows our gratitude to God for what He has provided and what He will provide in the future. If you really want to show gratitude, you give the best of what you've got, and not the "leftovers". Sifting the grain is an example of working to give God the best of what one has to offer.
  - e) How does this apply to our lives practically? We don't go to church and put a bunch of flour in the offering plate. What does God want from us in terms of "sifting wheat"?
    - i) In simplest terms, it is about giving God the best of what we've got. It is about giving the first of our earnings, and trusting that God will provide for tomorrow. It is not about giving God what is left of our salary at the end of the week.
    - ii) Here's another example: Many Christian church denominations start a weekly church service with a time of confession. Traditional Roman Catholic Church services have desire a formal time of confession the day before church service. The idea is to "sift out our lumps" before approaching God in a time of worship.
      - a) One can also apply this to regular confession as we pray. If we are offering our lives to God, we need to regular sift out the bad parts by confessing our sins to God and tell of our desire to change for the better. It is not about being perfect, it is about the desire to live at a higher standard and trust God to work through us to live the life He desires for us.
6. Verse 1 (cont.) He is to pour oil on it, put incense on it
- a) We have now finished preparing the flour. There are two more steps before taking this flour to the altar: One must add oil to it and one must add incense to it.
  - b) Let's start with the oil. In that culture, this meant olive oil. By taking olives and pressing them in big cisterns, the oil was squeezed out and separated. Oil was not only used for cooking, it was also a cooling substance poured on one's head in a desert culture.
    - i) Oil is associated with "anointing". Whenever someone in the bible was picked to do a certain job, the person had oil poured on their head as a symbol that the person was chosen for that job. When Samuel the prophet picked Saul to be the king, oil was poured on his head. (Ref. 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 10:1). When Samuel picked David as a young boy and told he would be king one day, oil was poured on his head. (Ref. 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 16:3). High Priests were also anointed with oil, as was described in Exodus and in upcoming chapters of Leviticus.
    - ii) Now let's get back to this grain offering. This offering is symbolic of our commitment to give gratitude to God and trust God for future provisions. That offering is "anointed" is it is now special to God. It is being given to God.

- c) The second word-picture of “oil” has to do with the Holy Spirit.
  - i) The Holy Spirit is difficult to describe because the bible never says at any one point, “This is the function of the Holy Spirit and here is how He works”. We get clues of His existence and purpose throughout the bible. His primary function is to work in the background to give glory to God. He works within us to make our lives in conformity to God’s will. In that sense, the Holy Spirit is like lubricating oil. He works through us to make us more functional for God.
  - ii) Now let’s tie this back to the grain offering. The idea is if we try to give something to God and “God is not in it”, we should not be giving that offering in the first place.
    - a) Imagine someone going through the motions of going to church. Their heart is not in it. They don’t really believe in Jesus. They just go, out of say, pressure from their spouse. They write a check out of guilt. They go to church because it is good for business. Those are examples of “grain offerings without oil”.
    - b) To put it another way, if we give to God, our heart has to be in it. We shouldn’t do it out of guilt or a grudge.
    - c) As Paul put it, “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2nd Corinthians 9:7, NIV)
- d) The final ingredient in this grain offering is “incense”.
  - i) Other translations say “frankincense”, which I prefer.
  - ii) In Exodus Chapter 30, God told Moses how to make a special “perfume” that is used in the offering. The idea here is not just any sweet smelling stuff, but a special, unique perfume that is associated with this offering.
  - iii) The sense of smell is one of the strongest memory triggers in our body. This particular incense was designed to be associated with God. One smells this smell and one thinks, “God”. It is designed to be a unique association with God.
  - iv) When this offering is put on the fire, that scent then rises up to heaven. This is a pleasing aroma. Seeing the smoke and smelling the scent rising up to heaven is a word picture of God accepting this offering.
  - v) So what is the practical application? Do we perfume the money we throw in the offering plate? No. ☺ It is the idea of what should go to God is “unique”.
    - a) For example, the first of our earnings should go to God. It is unique among our earnings because it is first. It is as if the first of our earnings has a special scent and we associate that scent with God.

e) OK, that’s two pages on one verse. I better pick up the pace. ☺

7. Verse 2: and take it to Aaron's sons the priests. The priest shall take a handful of the fine flour and oil, together with all the incense, and burn this as a memorial portion on the altar, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

- a) The person making the grain offering does all the cooking and prep work. That’s Verse 1.
- b) Verse 2 now describes the role of the priests who now take this offering.
- c) Remember that Aaron was Moses brother. He was alive when Leviticus was written. Aaron was the first high priest. His oldest son was to be the next high priest and so on. The remaining sons were also to work as assistants in the tabernacle.
- d) Now let’s describe what the priests are doing here:
  - i) A person walks in the tabernacle and wants to give a grain offering.
  - ii) The priest takes some, but not all the flour, and throws it on the barbeque pit.
  - iii) The priest takes some, but not all the oil. The oil is mixed in with the flour.
  - iv) The priest throws in all of the incense. This indicates the incense is not pre-mixed in with the flour.

- e) Let's talk about the "some's" and the "all's". All of the incense is used, but only some of the flour and oil is used. Why is this significant?
  - i) Remember the purpose of this offering. It is to say to God in effect, "I am grateful to You for providing for my life. I'm giving You from the first of my earnings. I trust that You will provide for me tomorrow. I'm giving You (burning up) the first of my earnings to show my gratitude and trust. The first of my earnings, mixed in with the Holy Spirit (through the oil) is being given to You."
  - ii) The incense is different in that it is not a "provision". The incense represents whatever is dedicated to God. The incense is a special smell that is only associated with God. Therefore "all" of the incense must be burned.
  - iii) In a similar picture, God does not require we give 100% of our earnings to Him. Christianity is not a vow of poverty. The grain offering is about gratitude and trust for future blessings. It is about giving part of what we earn back to God to show our gratitude and show our trust in Him for tomorrow's provisions.
- f) The last part of this verse says it is "pleasing to the Lord".
  - i) That means God is saying, "If you do it the exact way I told you to do it, it is acceptable." The problem with us is we want to approach God on our terms and not His. God is saying in Leviticus, that there is a way to approach God, but it is on His terms, and there is no deviation allowed.
- g) So why don't we do grain offerings today? The answer is we do. When we give at church, we are giving part of our substance. While the literal offering is not the same, the concept is the same. The same sort of faith it took the Israelites to burn up part of their livelihood, is the same sort of trust God wants when we give part of our substance.
  - i) I should deviate for a moment on the topic of giving. I do believe one should primarily give to their own church. One can also give to other Christian causes. Secular charity accomplishes good things, but it is not part of "building up the body of Christ", which is the primary mission of Christians. (See Eph. 4:11-13).
  - ii) For the Christian, everything we own belongs to God. Giving say, 10% of our earnings is a gesture that we trust God for tomorrow's provisions and is a way of showing gratitude. It is a modern equivalent of a grain offering.
  - iii) When it comes to giving, I like the "investment model." When we invest our money, we are looking for the best possible return on investment. Christians give the same way. They "invest" on what they perceive has a good rate of return. It may be some ministry that is blessing their lives or may be some ministry that is blessing other Christian lives. When giving, again, one should primarily give to one's own church. As to other Christian causes, look for those providing a good "return on investment." God holds us accountable for the money He has given us. With that in mind, it should be invested wisely.

8. Verse 3: The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the offerings made to the LORD by fire.
- a) Only part of the grain and oil was thrown in the fire. The rest of the grain was food for the High Priests for doing their jobs. If you want a biblical model that it is ok for professional clergy to make a living at being clergy, here it is. ☺
  - b) In the last lesson, I talked about how all Christians are priests. The word is similar to servants. The idea is to give of our time and resources to help others. Whenever we minister to another, we are acting like priests.
    - i) Now stop and think about that in the context of helping someone offer their time and resources to God. The priests personally benefits from that. Yes, it gives them food for provisions, but the word-picture is much bigger than that.

- ii) Let me explain: Doesn't it make us feel good when we help others? Isn't there a wonderful sense of joy when we give our time and resources to help others grow in their Christian faith? "Priests" get the privilege of seeing people show their gratitude to God. That increases their faith. They think, "If they can do it, so can I". We all have moments in weakness in our faith in God. Seeing others make commitments to God strengthens our own commitments. When others give of their substance to God, we get to share in that blessing as it helps our own faith.
- 9. Verse 4: "If you bring a grain offering baked in an oven, it is to consist of fine flour: cakes made without yeast and mixed with oil, or wafers made without yeast and spread with oil. <sup>5</sup> If your grain offering is prepared on a griddle, it is to be made of fine flour mixed with oil, and without yeast. <sup>6</sup> Crumble it and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering. <sup>7</sup> If your grain offering is cooked in a pan, it is to be made of fine flour and oil.
  - a) In these verses, we have different methodologies for preparing the grain offerings.
  - b) Notice some key words in Verses 4-6. They describe how this offering can be prepared.
    - i) The grain offering can be "baked in an oven". (Verse 4).
    - ii) The grain offering can be "prepared on a griddle". (Verse 5).
    - iii) The grain offering can be "cooked on a pan". (Verse 6).
    - iv) In all three cases, the offering is still "fine flour and oil". The only difference is the method of preparation. God gives us three different allowable options.
  - c) The cooking options have to do with monetary status. For example, not everybody had an oven. It's hard to lug that thing around wandering in the desert. ☺ A "griddle" is a special type of frying pan. The lowest cooking social status was a basic pan. I'm over-simplifying this concept, but you get the idea.
    - i) If you recall from chapter 1, the general idea is, "Use a bull for a burnt offering. If you can't afford a bull, I'll take sheep or a goat. If you can't afford a sheep or goat, I'll take a bird offering." This means that God desires a relationship with anyone and everyone. He's willing to work on whatever social status level we are on.
    - ii) It also means that God holds us accountable for the blessings we have received. In other words, "If you can afford a bull, don't try to be cheap and offer a bird."
    - iii) The same applies here to the grain offering. The grain offering is about giving part of our substance back to God. If we can afford "better substance", then we should give more back to God in our trust for Him. In other word, God is expecting a bigger cut of the pie for a corporate executive than a poor person. God desires we all give of our substance to God, but it should be proportional to our income level.
- 10. Verse 8: Bring the grain offering made of these things to the LORD; present it to the priest, who shall take it to the altar. <sup>9</sup> He shall take out the memorial portion from the grain offering and burn it on the altar as an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. <sup>10</sup> The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the offerings made to the LORD by fire.
  - a) Let's review a little and tie this together: What we have is a person making a food offering combining flour with oil. This recipe is then baked, grilled or fried. Special perfume or incense is then combined when it is brought to be offered.
    - i) This flour and oil offering is then taken to the tabernacle. This is a reminder that if one is going to offer part of their substance to God, one has to do it "His Way". In other words, an Israelite can't just make any old cooked concoction at home and then just say it is for God. They have to take it as specified to the tabernacle. God has a specific set of rules of how we are to commit our lives to God.
  - b) What are the "specific rules" for the Christian when it comes to this offering?
    - i) Remember this grain offering is symbolic of our continuing commitment to God
    - ii) The answer includes giving part of our income to the Christian church, and not just any charity.

- iii) The “only one way” requirements include our commitment to serve God and make Him a priority in our lives. It is about obedience to Jesus’ command to love one another and put other’s needs as a priority over our own.
    - iv) The idea for the Christian is that our new life in Jesus is not just an initial commitment, which was symbolic in the burnt offering. It is a lifetime commitment as symbolic here in the grain offering.
  - c) The next thing to notice is the word “portion” in Verse 9. Only a portion of this food is to be burnt up on the altar. The rest is to be eaten by the High Priests and His sons.
    - i) One reason part is burnt up, as I’ve stated earlier is to show God, “I’m burning part of this up to show my faith that You will provide for me tomorrow.”
    - ii) How does that work today? When we give our money to the local church or a Christian charity, we “burn it up” as far as having use of that money. Yes, the church is accountable for that money, but that is a separate issue. The point is we give up part of income to God and trust that He will provide for us tomorrow.
    - iii) As I’ve stated, the New Testament calls all Christians “priests”. There are applications for our lives when we read of the responsibilities and benefits of the priests as described here. When others in our church make regular commitments to God, we benefit. When others give of their time and income to the church, it benefits us. When someone watches our children during worship time, it gives us time to personally praise God in church. When someone gives of their income to the church, it financially provides so the pastoral staff, they have more time to prepare for service. We the “priests” benefit from others making a commitment.
  - d) Finally, notice is the word “holy”. That word means something that is completely dedicated to God. When we make a commitment to God, it has to be 100% for God. There are no compromises allowed. The “whole” grain offering must go to God, even though part of it is shared by the priests. When we give of our resources to God, what we give must all to God’s purpose. For example, if we agree to give 10% of our earnings to God, we can’t compromise on that and give part of it to a secular charity.
11. Verse 11: “Every grain offering you bring to the LORD must be made without yeast, for you are not to burn any yeast or honey in an offering made to the LORD by fire.
- a) In the first set of verses, we are told what is to be included in this offering. It is to be fine sifted flour, oil and some incense added.
  - b) Here in Verse 11, we are told what not to add: Yeast or honey.
    - i) Yeast or leaven (same thing) is a “corrupting” substance. When it is added to the other bread ingredients, the yeast causes the bread to rise. The problem is yeast eventually ruins the bread. Bread goes bad after some time due to the yeast.
    - ii) Yeast or leaven is a word picture of sin. The idea is yeast “corrupts by puffing up”. God is not anti-eating yeast. In fact, we’ll read that eating yeast is acceptable in certain situations. The idea is that offerings to God must be without yeast as it is a word-picture of sin. This is a common word-picture throughout the bible.
    - iii) On a practical level, the idea is when we commit our lives to God we are to live as sin-free as possible. Does that mean we are to be perfect? No, and that is impossible. At the same time, it does mean we are not to intentionally sin either. The lack of being perfect is no excuse to give up in the first place. We are to ask God to help us turn from sin and through His power avoid it as much as possible.
    - iv) The problem with anything not pleasing to God is that it never fully satisfies. We crave more and more to try to get the same satisfaction. That is a word-picture similar to yeast or leaven in that it “corrupts by puffing up”. The idea is that sin grows more and more if left unchecked.
      - a) “Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.” (James 1:15 NIV)

- c) The next item that is prohibited in this offering is honey. The actual Hebrew word refers to any naturally fermented sweet substance including fruit sugar.
  - i) The idea is the offering as God has ordained it, (fine flour plus oil plus incense) is just as God wants it. He doesn't want us to sweeten it over and above that.
  - ii) The idea would be like telling God, "Lord, I read your recipe for the grain offering and I thought it would taste better if I added a little honey. I hope you like it."
  - iii) The word-picture is trying to add our own "stuff" to God's requirements. The idea is "God requires what God requires" and we are not to add to it. We are not to put burdens on people that are not God-ordained. At the same time, we are not to try to please God with our own efforts over and above His requirements. In such cases, we are giving glory to us and not to God.
  - iv) Imagine someone going to church with a 10-foot long check for a big amount. They publicly make a display of giving that money to church and desire everyone to see it. First of all, Jesus said in effect that they won't get any reward in heaven for such a public display (See Matthew 6:2). This is also an extreme example of someone trying to "add honey" to their offering. God is not interested in us "sweetening" our commitment to Him with our own efforts over and above His requirements. It is about us being obedient to God and His desires for our lives.
- 12. Verse 12: You may bring them to the LORD as an offering of the firstfruits, but they are not to be offered on the altar as a pleasing aroma.
  - a) We will eventually get to another type of offering called "firstfruits". This is a name for a special holiday to be celebrated by all Jews. It is discussed in Exodus 23 and 34. When we get to Leviticus Chapter 23, we'll spend more time on it. It is an annual holiday at the time of Passover (spring) when the first of the grain is harvested is offered to God. It is similar to this grain offering. The difference is the grain offering of Chapter 2 is an individual offering while "firstfruits" is a collective offering by all of Israel.
  - b) The point here is that honey and yeast is permitted in the firstfruits offering, but not in the grain offering. I'll discuss that more when we get to "firstfruits" in Chapter 23.
- 13. Verse 13: Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings.
  - a) Here in Verse 13, we have one more step in this recipe: Add salt.
    - i) In other words, once the wheat and oil is baked, grilled or fried, the incense is added and salt is added.
  - b) Salt is a preservative. In order to keep meat from spoiling, salt was added. There are not a lot of refrigerators around when you're wandering in the desert for forty years. ☺
  - c) Salt is the opposite of yeast in that yeast "corrupts" say, bread while salt preserves bread.
  - d) All through the bible, including Jesus' sermons, salt is mentioned as a positive word-picture because it acts like a preservative. God says to add salt to all the offerings as a word-picture of "preservation". The idea is what we give to God is preserved.
    - i) Humans have memory loss. God is perfect and cannot forget anything. The point is we forget about God's commitment to us, but God does not forget. The salt is to help us remember that God is committed to keeping His unconditional promises to us for our salvation. It is permanently "persevered" like salt.
  - e) This is a good time to discuss the fact that Jesus called Christians, "The salt of the earth". (Matthew 5:13). Jesus was speaking to a Jewish audience. They understood that salt was part of all offerings and representing preservation. So how do Christians "preserve the earth"? Some argue it is our wonderful behavior that collectively keeps society from being too immoral. While that is true at times, it has not always historically been the case. The better interpretation of "Christians as salt" is that God will not destroy the earth as long as Christians are around. Let me explain further:



- i) In the Sodom and Gomorrah story, God told Abraham in effect as long as there are some righteous people living there, God would not destroy it. (Ref.: Gen. 18:32).
  - ii) Christians are called “righteous” not because we are perfect, but we are perfectly forgiven in our trust in Jesus paying the price for our sins. Like Sodom, God cannot destroy the world as long as “righteous” are living here. In that sense, Christians are the “preservatives” of the world. God promised in Genesis He would not destroy a place if there are righteous people living there.
  - iii) In another part of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot’s wife was turned into a pillar of salt because she looked back. (Ref. Genesis 19:26). Her punishment was that she desired the life of Sodom more than God. She was not “righteous”. The reason she was turned into salt is that salt “preserves”. God wants us to remember Lot’s wife as a memorial (preserving witness) by turning her into salt. Jesus himself told us to remember Lot’s wife (Luke 17:32) in that we are to seek God and not “look back” on this world.
14. Verse 14: “If you bring a grain offering of firstfruits to the LORD, offer crushed heads of new grain roasted in the fire. <sup>15</sup> Put oil and incense on it; it is a grain offering. <sup>16</sup> The priest shall burn the memorial portion of the crushed grain and the oil, together with all the incense, as an offering made to the LORD by fire.
- a) These last two verses are a final type of grain offering. The difference is preparation. Back in Verse 1, it says “made of fine flour”. Here in Verse 14, it says, “roasted grain”. (The King James Version says “corn”, but the reference is probably to wheat grain.) The point is if you don’t have the materials to make the grain into flour, God will accept an effort of simply crushing the grain.
  - b) If you recall from the burnt offering in Chapter 1, God said in effect, “Bring me a bull, which is an expensive offering. If you can’t afford a bull, bring a sheep or goat. If you can’t afford that, I’ll take a bird.” The same declining financial scale can be applied to this verse as well. If one cannot afford the “fine flour” used in the earlier verses, then one can offer crushed heads of grain.
  - c) The same way the flour had to be refined to eliminate lumps, so the grain must be crushed. The word-pictures are the same and it has to do with refinement prior to making that commitment (i.e., confessing our sins and having the desire to turn away from them as we make our regular commitment to God.)
15. Chapter 3, Verse 1: “If someone’s offering is a fellowship offering, and he offers an animal from the herd, whether male or female, he is to present before the LORD an animal without defect.
- a) Chapter 3 begins another type of offering. The NIV translation here calls it the “fellowship” offering. Other translations call it the “peace” offering.
  - b) The Hebrew word for peace, “Shalom”, is much broader in scope than we think of peace. The English word for peace usually means the end of some sort of hostility. The Hebrew word “shalom” is an all encompassing peace. It includes prosperity. It includes good health. It includes happiness. It is about all-encompassing well being.
  - c) The peace offering or the fellowship offering (same thing) is about the peace of God as opposed to the peace with God. In the next lesson, we’ll get into sin offerings and those sin offerings are symbolic of reconciled peace with God.
  - d) Let me paraphrase an idea of a fellowship or peace offering. “Lord, I am so happy to be part of Your family. Yes, my life has problems, but when I compare that with the fact, I’ll live forever in heaven, it is nothing. You love me and give me internal joy. It gives me happiness in spite of whatever circumstances are around me. You bless my life and I want to show my gratitude to you. Here Lord, have some sheep.” ☺
  - e) This peace offering does require animal sacrifices. We cannot have the peace of God without the reminder that blood must be shed on our behalf. We cannot have “life” without the death-payment for our sins.

- f) Notice the animal to be offered can be either male or female. Back in Chapter 1, when the burnt offering is made, the animal must be male.
    - i) Male domesticated animals (bulls, sheep, and goats) were considered more valuable as they were stronger animals. When it came to the burnt offering (i.e., a commitment that we belong to God), we give God our best.
    - ii) When it comes to this fellowship or peace offering, God's willing to "settle for a little less". In other words, blood must still be shed, but either a male or a female animal can be used.
  - g) The verse says the animal must be without defect. Back in Chapter 1, the animal must be "without blemish" (Ref.: Leviticus 1:3). In Chapter 1, the burnt animal sacrifice must be so perfect, there are no blemishes. The standards are lowered here in Chapter 3 and it is "only" without defect (e.g., crippled).
  - h) Why is this lower standard accepted for the peace offering?
    - i) Part of it is for us to understand that the peace offering is not as significant as the burnt offering. The burnt offering is about our lifetime commitment to God. The peace offering is one of gratitude during that lifetime commitment. The peace offering is important, but it cannot happen unless the burnt offering is in place.
    - ii) This peace offering is a celebration. It is time to show joy and gratitude. The price for sins has been paid (burnt offering). Further, we have committed our lives to God, which is symbolic of the grain offering. Now it is a time to celebrate with God. The word "fellowship" is used as it represents our time to get personal and commune with God. That is also symbolic of this offering.
16. Verse 2: He is to lay his hand on the head of his offering and slaughter it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Then Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood against the altar on all sides.
- a) There are a lot of similarities between the burnt offering and this fellowship offering:
    - i) In both cases, the person making the offer must kill and slaughter the animal.
    - ii) Again, the point of the killing is to remind us that in order to have the peace of God, we must first "die" for the punishment of our sins. Since we can't die and live at the same time, a "substitute" death is needed. The Israelites gave up these animals as a substitute offering for their own sins. They identified themselves with those animals. Verse 2 says they laid their hands on the animals head. This is a point of identification with the animals for their sins.
    - iii) The next similarity is the blood of the animal is put on all sides of the altar. This is a sign of a public witness of the person making the animal sacrifice.
  - b) Notice the person offering the animal can't kill it at home and bring the dead animal to the tabernacle. It had to be killed here on the spot. Again, this is about approaching God on His terms, and not ours.
  - c) Obviously Christians don't bring sheep to church today. We symbolically "lay our hands" on Jesus and say to Him in effect, "I am guilty as a sinner. I ask you to die for my sins. You (Jesus) must be slaughtered so that I can live." Jesus willingly agreed to be the "sacrificial animal" for our sins.
17. Verse 3: From the fellowship offering he is to bring a sacrifice made to the LORD by fire: all the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them, <sup>4</sup> both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver, which he will remove with the kidneys. <sup>5</sup> Then Aaron's sons are to burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering that is on the burning wood, as an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.
- a) Let me set the scene: Whoever wants to make this offering brings their animal to the tabernacle. After the person kills the animal, the animal is then cut up. Specifically, all the fat is to be removed. The text specifies the fat near the kidneys and liver. Those two organs are also removed and burned on the fire.

- b) In a few verses, we will learn that part of this offering is to be shared with the priests. Prior to that sharing, the fat and some organs must be burnt up on the altar.
  - c) Now let's talk about animal fat. If you've ever smelled a steak cooking, the fat is what gives the meat its flavor. The fat represents the best of the animal. Coming up in Verse 16, it says all the fat belongs to God. (Some of us are blessed more than others. ☺) Think of the word picture of "kill the fatted calf" in the prodigal son story (Luke 15:23). The idea of a "fatted" animal is a positive picture.
  - d) There were health benefits as well. Meat was not tested and preserved like it is today. Insects made their ways inside meat and were usually living in the fat.
  - e) The word picture of "giving up the fat" has to do with giving the best of our substance to God. It has nothing to do with being fat or skinny. That is a separate topic.
  - f) The text also says the kidneys and liver is to be burnt up. These are the organs that store "bad substances". They filter bad substances from good food. The word-pictures are about our preservation. Those preserving organs are given to God. It is similar to the "salt" word-picture as described a few pages back.
  - g) The only thing the priests do ("Aaron and His sons") are to keep the fire pit hot with wood and put the fat and organs on the fire. Again, think of all Christians when you read of the role of priests. We are to help others have peace with God. Our job is to "keep the fire hot". We then help others give the best to God as a sign of gratitude. Think of the concept of Christian unity. God desires that we give of our time and resources to help each other grow in the Lord. When others want to show their gratitude to God through this peace (or fellowship) offering, we are to offer "assistance".
18. Verse 6: "If he offers an animal from the flock as a fellowship offering to the LORD, he is to offer a male or female without defect. <sup>7</sup> If he offers a lamb, he is to present it before the LORD. <sup>8</sup> He is to lay his hand on the head of his offering and slaughter it in front of the Tent of Meeting. Then Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood against the altar on all sides. <sup>9</sup> From the fellowship offering he is to bring a sacrifice made to the LORD by fire: its fat, the entire fat tail cut off close to the backbone, all the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them, <sup>10</sup> both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver, which he will remove with the kidneys. <sup>11</sup> The priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made to the LORD by fire.
- a) I can move pretty fast through the remainder of Chapter 3 as these verses repeat the same requirements. The key difference is the sacrifice changes from a cow or bull to a sheep.
    - i) Verse 1 said if the offering is "of the herd".
    - ii) Verse 6 says if the offering is "of the flock".
    - iii) When we think of "herds", we think of cattle. The same applies here.
    - iv) When we think of "flocks", we think of sheep. The same applies here.
  - b) In other words, Verses 1 to 5 describe a peace offering by sacrificing a bull (or cow).
    - i) Verses 6-11 describe a peace offering by sacrificing a sheep.
    - ii) Other than that, these verses are pretty much a repeat of Verses 1 to 5.
    - iii) It is to say, "If you can't afford a bull, I the Lord still desire to spend time with you. The price for sin was paid (burnt offering). The commitment to Me has been made (grain offering). It's time to celebrate with a peace offering. If you can't afford a bull, I'll work on your level and I'll take a sheep."
  - c) The only other unique thing about the sheep offering is a mention of offering the fat-tail. The type of sheep used in that region had a big, heavy tail that was considered a delicacy. The idea again is to offer the best of what we have for God.
  - d) Again, the whole animal is not put on the altar, only certain parts. What is implied is that the person making the offer along with the priests then eats the rest together.

19. Verse 12: “If his offering is a goat, he is to present it before the LORD. <sup>13</sup> He is to lay his hand on its head and slaughter it in front of the Tent of Meeting. Then Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood against the altar on all sides. <sup>14</sup> From what he offers he is to make this offering to the LORD by fire: all the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them, <sup>15</sup> both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver, which he will remove with the kidneys. <sup>16</sup> The priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made by fire, a pleasing aroma.
- a) Here we have the same set of ordinances again, only this time it is a goat instead of a sheep. A goat has less meat than a sheep. A goat does not produce as much hair (wool). A goat has less value. It is God saying, “I desire a bull as it is the most valuable domesticated animal. If you can’t afford that, I’ll take a sheep. If you can’t afford a sheep, I’ll take a goat.”
  - b) Why do these verses repeat themselves? Wouldn’t it be easier to just say, bull, then sheep, then goat, and then list all the slaughtering details?
    - i) Think of this from the person who could only afford a goat. God is saying to them, “You are just as special to me as the one who can afford a bull. The requirements are same and I’m going to spell them out again and again so you know that you are just as special to me.”
    - ii) The only difference between the sheep and goat paragraph is the sheep’s paragraph had a special mention of the “tail”. Again, that “tail” can weigh over 20 pounds and is a special delicacy. That big tail did not exist for the goat.
20. Verse 16 (cont.) All the fat is the LORD's. <sup>17</sup>“This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live: You must not eat any fat or any blood.”
- a) The last verse has a special rule that says no Israelite can ever eat fat or blood. Both must be offered to God. First, let’s talk about the prohibition against eating blood.
    - i) Why is the eating of blood prohibited? Because blood represents “life”. God respects human life and desires we live it for Him. The same way murder is a death sentence is the same idea that blood is prohibited from consumption. This is a word-picture of the respect for life itself.
    - ii) When we hear the term “kosher meat”, this rule applies. The idea is that all the blood is drained out and all the fat is removed. In practical terms, this may be 100% impossible, but the idea is to remove as much as possible. One still is to attempt to remove as much as possible.
    - iii) Do Christians have to drain meat the same way? No, in that Jesus blood sacrifice fulfilled this requirement. (See Hebrews 9:11-15). In Acts 15:20, Jewish Christians got together and requested that non-Jewish Christians refrain from eating blood. The idea is not that it is still a sin, but it is offensive to Jewish people. The Jewish Christians asked the Gentile Christians to give up this “right” as to not be offensive to them.
  - b) Why is eating fat prohibited? Yes there are health benefits for avoiding fat, and that is a part of it. God wants us to have a healthy life. The main word picture is that the fat represents the “best” of the animal. The idea is we give the best of our lives to God and He turns around and rewards us for that commitment.
  - c) God specifically says all fat belongs to Him. If you want to have fun at your next church picnic, bring a heavy-fat dessert. When people ask why you are eating it, say that all fat belongs to God (Leviticus 3:16) and state you desire to increase your holiness! ☺
21. Let’s wrap up the last two chapters and tie in some final thoughts:
- a) Chapter 2 focused on a grain offering. It is the only “non-blood” offering in Leviticus. The offering focuses on “us”. It is about a lifetime commitment of our lives to God. The idea is to give up some portion of one’s earnings and say to God, “I am thankful for what you have done for my life. I trust You to provide for future provisions. I am burning up part of my earnings (in this case, grain) so show my trust in you.”

- b) Chapter 3 focuses on a peace offering, also called a fellowship offering. The idea is communion with God. It is a way of saying, “I’ve committed my life to you (Chapter 1, by the burnt offering). I’m going to regularly offer myself to you in dedication (Chapter 2, the grain offering), now I can celebrate with God and just spend time with Him (Chapter 3, the peace offering). Part of this offering is to be eaten by the person giving the offering. Part is to be shared with the priests. The offering speaks of unity within the church as fellow believers eat together.
  - c) In the next few chapters we are going to discuss offerings for sin.
    - i) What I want you to notice is the order of the offerings: This peace offering is discussed prior to an offering for our sins. Shouldn’t it be the other way around?
    - ii) The answer is the idea is the peace offering is about the peace of God.
    - iii) Getting forgiveness for our sins gives us peace with God. The order is important.
    - iv) For the Christian, once we’ve committed our lives to God, all sins are dealt with (without going into the usual details about the cross.) This is not a license to sin all we want. If we are grateful for Jesus payment for our sins, we should then live a life of obedience out of that gratitude. The problem is we still sin, and that sin requires confession to make us a better person.
    - v) My point here is the “peace of God” does come before sin offering, because for Christians, the price of sin was taken care of. We don’t have to have a perfect day, a perfect week or year before we can have peace with God. It is about our trust in Jesus that all of our sins are dealt with. That is why the peace offering can be listed prior to the sin offering of the next chapter. The sin offering deals with sins we make after we have committed our lives to God.
22. Let’s pray: Father, I thank you for these word-pictures about what you require of us and ask of us. Help us to think about these sacrifices and apply them to our lives. Help us to make a regular commitment of our lives and have the boldness and faith to keep up that commitment. Finally, increase our peace within us. Help us to remember that You are in charge, and You want good things for our lives. Helps us to have joy and keep that eternal perspective as we live to glorify You. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.