

LEVITICUS

Chapter 3

Laws for Peace Offerings

“If his offering is a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offers an animal from the herd, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD. 2 And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and kill it at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons the priests shall throw the blood against the sides of the altar. 3 And from the sacrifice of the peace offering, as a food offering to the LORD, he shall offer the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, 4 and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins, and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys. 5 Then Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering, which is on the wood on the fire; it is a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 6 “If his offering for a sacrifice of peace offering to the LORD is an animal from the flock, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish. 7 If he offers a lamb for his offering, then he shall offer it before the LORD, 8 lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it in front of the tent of meeting; and Aaron's sons shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar. 9 Then from the sacrifice of the peace offering he shall offer as a food offering to the LORD its fat; he shall remove the whole fat tail, cut off close to the backbone, and the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails 10 and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys. 11 And the priest shall burn it on the altar as a food offering to the LORD. 12 “If his offering is a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD 13 and lay his hand on its head and kill it in front of the tent of meeting, and the sons of Aaron shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar. 14 Then he shall offer from it, as his offering for a food offering to the LORD, the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails 15 and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys. 16 And the priest shall burn them on the altar as a food offering with a pleasing aroma. All fat is the LORD's. 17 It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, in all your dwelling places, that you eat neither fat nor blood.”

3:1 *peace offering.* See further priestly regulations in 7:11–21, 28–34. Two basic ideas are included in this offering: peace and fellowship. The traditional translation is “peace offering,” a name that comes from the Hebrew word for the offering, which in turn is related to the Hebrew word *shalom*, meaning “peace” or “wholeness.” Thus the offering perhaps symbolized peace between God and man as well as the inward peace that resulted. The fellowship offering was the only sacrifice of which the offerer might eat a part. Fellowship was involved because the offerer, on the basis of the sacrifice, had fellowship with God and with the priest, who also ate part of the offering (7:14–15, 31–34). This sacrifice—along with others—was offered by the thousands during the three annual festivals in Israel (see Ex 23:14–17; Nu 29:39) because multitudes of people came to the temple to worship and share in a communal meal. During the monarchy, the animals offered by the people were usually supplemented by large numbers given by the king. At the dedication of the temple, Solomon offered 20,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep and goats as fellowship offerings over a period of 14 days (1Ki 8:63–65). (CSB)

male or female. Burnt offerings required a male sacrifice; peace offerings had no such requirement. (TLSB)

3:4 *fat that is on them* – The fat covering the inner parts of the animal was not eaten, since it was regarded as a choice portion reserved for God alone. The kidneys and the covering of the liver were also removed. The kidneys and other internal organs are referred to in the OT as the seat of the emotions. It is possible

that offering the kidneys and the covering of the liver symbolized the dedication of the worshiper's deepest emotions to God. (PBC)

long lobe of the liver. The liver was burned completely, removing it from use in fortune-telling (cf 19:26; Dt 18:10). Ancient pagan cultures used liver for divination. (TLSB)

3:5 *on top of the burnt offering.* The burnt offerings for the nation as a whole were offered every morning and evening, and the fellowship offerings were offered on top of them. (CSB)

3:9 *fat tail.* A breed of sheep still much used in the Middle East has a tail heavy with fat. (CSB)

Considered a delicacy representing the produce of the land (cf Gn 45:18). (TLSB)

Scholars have discovered that sheep raised in Palestine in Bible times had a tail which served to store body fat. (PBC)

3:11, 16 *on the altar as food.* Israelite sacrifices were not “food for the gods” (as in other ancient cultures; see Eze 16:20; cf. Ps 50:9–13) but were sometimes called “food” metaphorically (21:6, 8, 17, 21; 22:25) in the sense that they were gifts to God and that he received them with delight. (CSB)

3:17 *eat neither fat nor any blood.* special occasions, God provides meat for a sacrificial banquet, which a family could share with invited guests (7:11–36; 19:5–6; 23:37). Peace offerings acknowledge God's grace toward His people. Jesus' death was God's great peace offering for the world, since the Father brought about our peace and reconciliation through Jesus. • Gracious Father, we thank You for Your peace through Christ, who offered Himself for the sins of the world. Grant us generous hearts to share Your peace. Amen. (TLSB)