

Leviticus 3:1-17

The **peace offering** (Hebrew: *shelem*) was a big deal for the Israelites because it symbolized peace and connection with God. This offering wasn't just about following rules—it was about celebrating a restored relationship with God through the shedding of blood, which pointed forward to Jesus. It was like a spiritual party, full of joy, love, and communion with God and others.

What Was the Peace Offering?

There were three types of animals you could bring, depending on what you could afford:

- An **ox** or **cow** (male or female)
- A **lamb** (male or female)
- A **goat** (male or female)

Basically, it was an offering everyone could take part in, no matter their financial situation.

What Did You Have to Do?

If you were bringing this offering, here's what went down:

1. **Present the animal:** You'd bring it to the entrance of the Tabernacle.
2. **Lay your hand on the animal's head:** This symbolized transferring your sins or gratitude onto it.
3. **Kill the animal:** Yep, you had to do it yourself at the entrance of the Tabernacle.
4. **Remove specific parts:** The fat, kidneys, fat tail, and the fatty lobe of the liver were taken out. These were considered the best parts and were burned on the altar as God's portion.

What Did the Priests Do?

The priests had a pretty big role too:

- They **sprinkled the animal's blood** around the altar, symbolizing life given to God.
- They burned the fat and other specified parts on top of the altar, offering it as a gift to God.

Who Got What?

This offering was different because *you*, the offerer, got a share! Here's how it was divided:

- **God's portion:** The fat, kidneys, and liver were burned on the altar.
- **Priests' portion:** The officiating priest got the right thigh, and the other priests received the breast (after waving it before God).

- **Your portion:** You got the rest of the meat! You'd likely throw a feast with family and friends to celebrate and reflect on God's blessings.

This offering wasn't just a ritual—it was about building peace between you, God, and others in the community.

Why Did They Do It?

Bringing a peace offering was a way to say:

- **Thank you** to God for blessings or answered prayers.
- **I'm grateful** for the peace I have with God.
- **I'm committing** to a vow or promise I made to God.

It was a joyful way to express love and gratitude for everything God had done.

What's the Bigger Meaning for Us?

This offering points straight to Jesus. He's the ultimate peace offering! Here's why:

- **Jesus is our peace** (Ephesians 2:14). Through His sacrifice on the cross, He brought peace between us and God.
- **Jesus broke down barriers:** His death brought Jews and non-Jews together in one family (Ephesians 2:17).
- Because of Jesus, we can have a relationship with God without fear or guilt.

An Interesting Fact About Fat and Blood

God told the Israelites not to eat the fat or blood because these belonged to Him. Interestingly, avoiding fat in excess was also a form of early preventative medicine. Fast forward to today, and doctors are still saying the same thing: cut back on unhealthy fats to reduce the risk of things like heart disease and strokes.

Takeaway

Even though we don't offer animal sacrifices anymore, the peace offering still teaches us a lot. It's a reminder to:

- Celebrate the peace we have with God through Jesus.
- Thank God for His blessings with joyful worship.
- Share God's goodness with others.

Next time you sit down for a meal with family or friends, think of it as your own mini peace offering—a chance to thank God and connect with the people around you.