

# The Various Levitical Offerings

Burnt Offerings

Tribute Offerings

Peace Offerings

Sin Offerings

Offensive Offerings

## Burnt Offerings Lev. 1:1–17 6:8–13

1. The Hebrew word is *ʿôlâh* (עֹלָה) [pronounced *oh-LAWH*] and this is a word consistently translated *burnt offering* and, occasionally, *burnt sacrifice*. *ʿôlâh* comes from the Hebrew word *ʿâlâh* (עָלָה) [pronounced *aw-LAWH*]; notice that the consonants are exactly the same; they only differ in vowel points. The latter word means *climb, ascend, go up*; it is often used in connection with fire and smoke. The word for burnt sacrifice is based upon this word and perhaps it might be better translated *offerings ascending by fire*. This word occurs as early as Gen. 8:30 (Noah offered several burnt sacrifices after the flood), several times in Gen. 22, a dozen times in Exodus and several hundred times thereafter. *ʿôlâh* is translated fairly consistently, with the exceptions of Ezek. 40:26
2. To determine the meaning of a particular Hebrew word, it is often covered in reasonable detail in the book of Genesis. When this word is found in Gen. 22, it clearly identifies the offering with Jesus Christ. This is the story of Yahweh telling Abraham that he must offer his only begotten son to God; then, right before Abraham is to slit his sons throat, God reveals a scapegoat to Abraham to substitute for the death of his son. The parallels were covered when we exegeted Gen. 22. However, in any case, the burnt offering is therein identified with (1) the sacrifice of one's first-born; (2) the sacrifice of the son of promise; (3) the death of the innocent; (4) The promises of God for the temporal and eternal future; and, (5) the ram, who is sacrificed in Isaac's stead.
3. Another great example of a burnt offering is in the closing verses of Judges 13. The Angel of Jehovah has appeared to Manoah and his wife (actually, to his wife only) and told her that she was about to give birth to a child, although she was infertile. Manoah insists upon meeting this Angel, not really realizing Who He was (He was Jesus Christ). When Manoah and his wife offered up a burnt sacrifice, suddenly then Angel of Jehovah appeared in the flame and ascended into heaven with the sacrifice, providing us with another marvelous foreshadowing of the cross. Judges 13:17–25
4. Job, who likely pre-dated the Law (he was probably a contemporary of the Patriarchs) offered burn offerings (Job 1:5), as did his friends, incorrect as they were in their assessment of his troubles (Job 42:7–9).
5. Moses, when asking Pharaoh to take the Israelites into the desert, required that they take their livestock along so that they could offered burnt sacrifices to Yahweh (Ex. 10:25).
6. Part of the fellowship between Moses and his father-in-law included a burnt sacrifice (Ex. 18:12).
7. Immediately after the Ten Commandments were issued, God required a temporary sacrificial system, which involved burnt offerings (Ex. 20:24–25 24:4–8). This is because all generations at all times must be aware that Yahweh required the death of the innocent on behalf of the guilty.
8. After the Ten Commandments had been given, God issued His decrees concerning the Levitical Priesthood. The ceremonies to consecrate (set apart) the Aaronic priesthood included burnt offerings (Ex. 20:1–37).
9. The first offering spoken of following the burnt offerings for the consecration of Aaron's sons were the burnt offerings of the lamb, one to be offered at twilight, the other in the morning day and night forever (Ex. 29:38–42 Num. 28:3–4, 23).
10. A specific altar was built one which would be offered all of the various offerings herein enumerated. Since it was called the altar of burnt offering, this would indicate that *burnt offering* can be a collective term which includes the other Levitical offerings to come (Ex. 29:28 31:9 see also Ex. 30:9 35:16).
11. Beginning with Lev. 1:3, a specific class of offerings were outlined known as the burnt offerings (this is *ʿôlâh* used for a more specific set off offerings). Most of the time hereafter, the term *burnt offerings* was specific rather than general (Lev. 6:12, 25 7:2 9:7).
12. Our Lord and His work upon the cross is depicted by these burnt offerings:
  - a. He is a lamb without spot and without blemish (Lev. 1:3, 10 Heb. 9:14 I Peter 1:19 2:22).
  - b. As the sins of the offerer were identified with the animal, so our sins are identified with Jesus Christ (Lev. 1:4 II Cor. 5:21). As we will see, there is no Hebrew word for *sin-offering* or for *sin-bearer*. Both words a rightly translated that way and the Hebrew word behind them is the simple Hebrew word for *sin*.

- c. Just as the death of the burnt offering was a propitiatory offering (it covered the sinners sins); so our Lord's death is a propitiation for our sins (Lev. 16:14–15<sup>1</sup> Rom. 3:25 I John 2:2).
  - d. As did the burnt sacrifice, our Lord bore our sins in His Own body on the cross (I Peter 2:24). It was imperative that the sacrifice die and that our Lord die (Lev. 1:5 Mark 8:31–33).
  - e. The death of the animal was substitutionary (Gen. 22:13–14); the death of our Lord was substitutionary (II Cor. 5:21).
  - f. As the fire for the burnt offering was to remain constantly burning, so His sacrifice for us is eternal (Lev. 6:9, 12–13 I Peter 1:4 I John 1:7).
13. Several different animals could be offered in the class of burnt offerings:
- a. A male bull, without defect, would be slain, have its blood sprinkled at the foot of the altar, the nit would be skinned, cut into pieces, and all would be offered upon the altar (although the legs and the entrails were washed first to emphasize the ceremonial cleansing) Lev. 1:3–9. The priest kept the hide (Lev. 7:8).
  - b. A sheep or goat without defect would be slain, have its blood sprinkled about the altar, then it was cut into pieces and these pieces were place upon the altar and burned (the entrails and legs were first washed, however) (Lev. 1:10–13).
  - c. A turtledove or pigeon could be offered; its head was wrung off, the blood drained at the side of the altar, the crop and feathers placed with the fat ashes, and the torn, but not severe bird was then offered (Lev. 1:14–17). Incidentally, an individual would offer two birds, one for a sin offering and one for a burnt offering (Lev. 5:7, 10).
14. The fire of the burnt offering was to burnt continuously, day and night (Lev. 6:9, 12 I Chron. 16:40).
15. This is the only offering where the entire animal, apart from the hide, was burnt upon the altar (the hide *covered* the priests; i.e., it was a propitiation for the priests). Since the entirety of the animal was burned, it was called the *whole* burnt offering (Lev. 1:6–9 Deut. 33:10 Psalm 51:19).
16. The ashes of the burnt offering were laid beside the altar (Lev. 6:10).
17. After an animal was chosen, he was referred to as a *burnt offering* even while still alive (Lev. 9:12 14:19).
18. Other offerings were often added to the burnt offerings (likely those offerings in the evening and morning). Lev. 6:12
19. When sacrifices and burnt offerings became ceremonial, lacking meaning, Samuel warned King Saul that God desired obedience more than sacrifice (I Sam. 15:22–23).
20. Just as the offering of Jesus Christ was one of great sacrifice to God the Father, so a burnt offering should involve some sacrifice on the part of the offerer (II Sam. 24:24–25).
21. There are times when burnt offerings are unacceptable to God (Psalm 51:16 Jer. 6:20 Amos 5:5); usually, these are times of great apostasy when sacrifices to God have become strictly ceremonial (Isa. 1:11–13 Hos. 6:6)
22. At times, the lack of burnt offerings was indicative of times of apostasy (Isa. 43:22–24).
23. At some point in time, God would not longer require burnt offerings and sacrifices; this is at the first advent of Jesus Christ, His Son (Psalm 40:6–10 Heb. 10:5, 8–9).
24. All the burnt offerings throughout time cannot remove the taint of sin from our lives; only the death of Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself one time for us all (Heb. 10:10–12, 14). Other than His death on the cross, their is no other offering for sin (Heb. 10:18).
25. Ezekiel describe a millennial temple in Ezek. 40–43, where burnt offerings are mentioned in Ezek. 40:38–39, 42 43:18, 24, 27 etc. The purpose of these burnt offerings is a memorial to Jesus Christ and what He did for all of mankind of the cross (Ezek. 45:17).
26. There is no question but that the New Testament teaches that our Lord offered Himself up as a sacrifice on our behalf (Eph. 5:2).
27. The burnt offering is the first offering because it symbolizes our Lord's death upon the cross for us. Everyone must begin their spiritual life at the cross. In Israel, everyone began their spiritual life at the altar of the burnt offering when they believed in Yahweh for salvation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Mercy seat* and *propitiatory* are the same Hebrew word. To be more precise, this particular passage in Leviticus deals with the *sin-offering* in context; however, as we have seen, *sin-offering* is a type of *burnt offering* (when *burnt offering* is used in the generalized sense).

<sup>2</sup> I am not saying here that everyone is literally at the altar when they believe in Yahweh; just as when we in the church age come to the cross of our Lord, it does not mean that we are physically standing on Golgotha straining into a blackened sky in the direction of the cross.

## Tribute Offerings      Lev. 2:1–16 6:14–23

1. Both Scofield, in the KJV, and Freeman, call this the *meat offerings*; the NIV Study Bible refers to this as the *grain offerings*; other prefer *meal offerings* or *cereal offerings*. The Hebrew word is *minchâh* (מִנְחָה) [pronounced *min-KHAWH*] (Strong's #4503 BDB #585), first found in Gen. 4:3–5. The definition itself will require several points:
  - a. Gen. 4:3–5 introduces us to *minchâh*. It can refer to an offering of vegetables, which was rejected by God (Gen. 4:3, 5) or to meat (Gen. 4:4).
  - b. *Brown Driver Briggs*, on p. 585, call the KJV rendering of *meat offering* (e.g., Lev. 2:1, 3–9) very misleading, as it can refer to an offering which is unquestionably a *cereal offering* or a *grain offering* (Gen. 4:3 Num. 5:25–26).
  - c. Jacob, having swindled his brother Esau on two occasions, returned to his brother with many presents in order to placate Esau (thinking him to be as greedy and as unforgiving as himself). The word translated *present or gift* is *minchâh* (Gen. 32:13, 18, 20–21). These gifts included 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes and 20 rams. This present is decidedly non-vegetarian. Furthermore, it could be translated *offering*, but that does not give us a full picture. It is better *present* or a *tribute* brought to someone out of respect in hopes of placating that person, doing obeisance to them, etc.
  - d. I personally would like a rendering which would (1) differentiate it from *qorbân* and *terûmâh* (two words also translated *offering*),<sup>3</sup> (2) allow for some consistency when *minchâh* is found, regardless of the context, and (3) to translate it without damaging its meaning. When going from one language to another, it is not always possible to find one word which can consistently render the word in question because the word in question might have several divergent meanings or different shades of meanings, depending upon the context. However, for *minchâh*, we can come up with a consistent translation: *tribute-offering* or, simply *tribute*. Not only does this square with Gen. 4, 32, and 43, but it smooths out the translation of Judges 3:15–18. Because this word became so closely associated with the offerings of grain or flour, it became synonymous in Jewish thought with a *grain offering*; however, this does not mean that *minchâh* originally meant *grain offering* nor does it mean it should be translated that way. I would think that this rendering came after the completion of the Old Testament canon. The translation *grain-offering* certainly will not square with its usage in I Sam. 26:19 II Sam. 8:2, 6 I Kings 4:21 10:25.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the Old Testament, we see *minchâh* used almost side-by-side to mean both an offering to God and tribute to man (II Kings 16:15 cpw 17:3–4 II Chron. 16:29 cpw 18:2, 6).
  - e. *Minchâh* is often used in close association with *qâr<sup>ê</sup>bân* (קָרַבָּן) [pronounced *kor'-BAWN*].<sup>5</sup> *Minchâh* and *qâr<sup>ê</sup>bân* are found together in Lev. 2 and Lev. 6:20; but it is not found with *minchâh* anywhere else in Lev. 6. Furthermore, *qâr<sup>ê</sup>bân* actually took on a life of its own, also being transformed in meaning by the time of our Lord. By itself, it means *offering*; however, it is closely tied to the verb *approach, come near*, *qîrav* (קָרַב) [pronounced *ki-RAV*] (recall that the *b* and *v* are the same letter; the difference is a dagesh). Although I will stay with the word *offering*; the word *approach* is not a bad translation, as long as it is seen as an approach to God or a drawing near to God. In fact, in many ways this is a better rendering of *qâr<sup>ê</sup>bân*, as the word *offering* implies something that we do for God, whereas this is just a way that we are allowed to approach Him; this is a matter of grace shed upon us; it is not something that we do for God. Notice how even that slight shade of meaning dramatically changes one's perception of what is occurring here. On the one hand, you are making a sacrifice, taking something of yours and giving it to God; on the other hand, this is a matter of grace, a way to approach God, a way to have fellowship with Him; there is a world of difference between those two shades of meaning. As a side note, *qâr<sup>ê</sup>bân* is only found in Leviticus, Numbers and two places in Ezekiel (and possibly twice in Nehemiah). Other than that, we don't hear of it until the New Testament where it is distorted.
2. As has been mentioned, *minchâh* is used in three places in Genesis, which allowed us to get a fix on its meaning:

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<sup>3</sup> Although *terûmâh* is better rendered *contribution*.

<sup>4</sup> Do not think that the naming of these passages preclude *minchâh* from referring to a offering of tribute of flour, oil and frankincense in the historical books; see I Kings 8:64 18:29, 36.

<sup>5</sup> I would have thought this would be pronounced *kawr'-BAWN*.

- a. In Genesis 4, Cain and Abel both brought *offerings* to God; Cain brought vegetables and produce, as he was a farmer and Abel brought an animal which he sacrificed. It may have been too gruesome to Cain to bring some innocent animal and slit its throat in a religious ceremony, so he brought the hard work of his hands. Both offerings or sacrifices are called *minchâh*. Either rendering would seem apt, except for the next two occurrences of this word in Genesis and for the fact that it is attached to the word *qâr<sup>e</sup>bân* in Lev. 2.
  - b. Jacob uses this term when attempting to bribe his brother Esau for swindling him in years gone by. One could loosely render *minchâh* as a present, and that would be a reasonable rendering; in fact, *present* would be a reasonable, all-purpose definition; but it is not quite the nuance which I would want. You don't exactly bring God a present, as in Gen. 4:4, and you don't exactly bring an *offering* to your older brother. This is found in Gen 32.
  - c. The third time we find this word is in Gen. 43. Joseph's eleven brothers originally went to Egypt to get grain and food for their families back in the land of Canaan early on during the seven-year depression. Joseph desired to see his brother Benjamin again and implored them to bring Benjamin back, and kept Simeon hostage until they did (recall that they did not know who he really was). Within the year, their stock ran out (they were expecting things to improve by the next growing season) so they had to return to Egypt, hat in hands, as they had not come back as they had promised with Benjamin. In order to pay tribute to Joseph and to show their respect for him, they brought him a *minchâh*, which was a present, but more than that, it was a tribute, a show of respect and remorse for not having followed his directions as he expected.
3. We should take a glance at the use of *minchâh* in Exodus also:
    - a. Ex. 29:41 says that the continual burnt offerings should be accompanied in the morning by a tribute (and it would later be revealed that this tribute was a bloodless offering). The contents of this offering were described in Ex. 29:40.
    - b. When giving Moses instructions as to the purpose and the construction of the altar of incense, he was told not to offer on it a burnt offering, a tribute, etc. upon it (Ex. 30:9).
    - c. The first use of the brazen altar is recorded in Ex. 40:29 where the burnt offering and tribute were offered by Moses.
  4. Beginning in Lev. 2, *minchâh* is used as a construct in conjunction with *qâr<sup>e</sup>bân*. Literally, they should be rendered *a tribute of approach*; and less literally, but reasonably accurate *a tribute of offering*; and we have opted, most of the time to render it simply as *a tribute offering*. Because of its constant association with *qâr<sup>e</sup>bân* here, it is later used alone, as in Genesis, but with more of a specialized meaning as a specific type of offering—a tribute offering. This is a reasonable linguistic stretch, as the words *sin* and *guilt* are both translated in a similar context as *sin-offering* and *guilt-offering*.
  5. Now for the specifics of the tribute-offering itself:
    - a. This tribute offering is made up of fine flour, oil and frankincense, which, collectively, speak of the Living Word and the written Word (Lev. 2:1–2). The oil alone is the indwelling and the filling of the Holy Spirit (it is mixed into the flour) (Matt. 1:18–23); the flour is the body of our Lord; and the frankincense is the tranquilizing scent to Yahweh. As the written Word, the flour is the word, which is insipid without the guiding and teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the frankincense is the result of the Word resident in our human spirits. A person who is filled with doctrine and has some sense of direction and responsibility will not appear to everyone around him as a self-righteous, stuffed-shirt pain-in-the-neck but he should be a well of refreshment to those in his periphery. Many of us should be aiming toward the indwelling of the written Word before we even go out in public; or, at least, before we start telling everyone that we are born-again. There is no glory in being an embarrassment to Jesus Christ.
    - b. When it comes to us, the fine flour stands for evenness of character, a balance in our lives; the oil is the filling of the Holy Spirit and the frankincense is the sweet savor of our lives which is a result of the previous **the filling of the Spirit with an evenness of character. Paul alludes to this in Phil. 4:18 when he writes, But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.** The involvement with the Holy Spirit would require that this kind of an offering be made at Pentecost; this is confirmed by Lev. 23:16, 18.
    - c. This offering was made specifically without honey, meaning that the Living Word, the written Word and our lives do not reflect a natural human sweetness which can be a matter of personal development or a personality trait. This certainly does not preclude graciousness on our part. Lev. 2:11

- d. To carry the analogy further, baked cakes (Lev. 2:4) speak of daily testing for approval of our Lord and the unseen suffering which He faced (Isa. 53:3, 10). In our lives, it also speaks of the testing and the finishing work of the holy spirit in our lives. For those of you who do not cook, if you place flour in the oven by itself and flour in the oven mixed with oil, the latter will cook into a cake or sorts and the former will not appreciably change.
  - e. Being that this is a bloodless sacrifice, this does not speak specifically of the death of Jesus Christ, as noted above; the offerer is placing this side-by-side the burnt offering, which speaks of our salvation and our deliverance; the tribute offering or approach speaks of some of the spiritual benefits of believing in Yahweh. But notice, the burnt offering is first and the bloodless offering is never presented to God apart from the burnt offering. In Lev. 2, only v. 2 hints that this is offered with the burnt offering, but this is stated outright in Ex. 29:41 40:29 Num. 14:10 15:1–16.
  - f. An offering of the first fruits was not offered on brazen altar (Lev. 2:12).
  - g. A portion of the bloodless tribute belonged to Aaron and his sons (Lev. 2:3 9–10 6:16, 18). Two things are in view here: (1) Aaron and his sons had to be remunerated in their dedication to Yahweh; and (2) when we have the Living Word and the written Word in our lives, our blessings overflow to others.
  - h. The bread or cakes were made of unleavened flour, without leaven or yeast, both of which speak of the infiltration of false doctrine and apostasy (Lev. 2:4 6:17 Mark 8:15 I Cor. 5:6–8).
  - i. The wafers or cake was broken into bits and oil was poured upon it, speaking of (1) our Lord's body broken for us (recall the Eucharist), and the fact that we take the written Word a little at a time. You do not go to church one time and ingest all of the spiritual information that you need for your life. Even getting this information once a week is not sufficient (Lev. 6).
  - j. Along with this bloodless offering was to be salt; legal covenants were often ratified with salt in the ancient world (Lev. 2:13). The tribute offering with salt indicated the ratification of the covenant between man and God; the immediate context is God's Law; then generalized meaning applies to God's covenant with us, which we really get a much better understanding of in the New Testament. We become sons by adoption, and with this sonship comes certain privileges and certain obligations and duties. The obligations and duties have no effect upon whether or not we are saved, but we are affected when it comes to discipline. When one becomes a believer in Jesus Christ, we have the option of turning our backs on God and falling into whatever areas of sins we feel like; however, God the Father will discipline us, something we did not face as unbelievers.
  - k. This offering of tribute is said to be a tranquilizing scent to God in several places (Lev. 2:2, 9).
  - l. The anointed priest offers this before Yahweh (Lev. 2:9 6:22, 26). Our intermediary which allows us a life before God in the Word is Jesus Christ, our High Priest.
6. As with the burnt offerings, God does not desire ritual without reality, tribute without meaning (Isa. 1:13 Jer. 14:12 Amos 5:22 Mal. 1:10 2:13).
7. In the millennium, tribute will be brought to Yahweh (Zeph. 3:10 Mal. 1:11 3:3–4).<sup>6</sup>

## Peace Offerings

### Lev. 3:1–17 7:11–34 22:21–23

1. The first thing to note are the definitions of the various words used in relationship to the peace offerings:
  - a. The first word to note is shelem (שֶׁלֶם) [pronounced *SHE-lem*], a word not found until Ex. 20:24, although its cognate forms occur two dozen times prior to this passage. One of its cognates is the very familiar shâlôwm (שָׁלוֹם) [pronounced *shaw-LOHM*], the Hebrew word for *peace and prosperity*. Other than the vowel points and the ם, which acts like a vowel, we have the same word, which often means that the meanings are closely related. Shelem is found nowhere else except with regards to specific offerings, it is reasonable to translate shelem as peace-offering. However, this word is more encompassing than simple peace with God. It refers to prosperity, as in prosperity from God; to an alliance, as in an alliance with God; to an alliance, as in an alliance with God; and fellowship, because through the blood of our Lord, we have fellowship with God. Peace offering encompasses all of that. Notice that prior to having a peace

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<sup>6</sup> You may have noticed that in the last two points, the references to Malachi have checker-boarded; that is, one will be used to affirm that God does not desire empty sacrifices and right next to it will be a passage of tribute offerings in the millennium; this is the contrast of Malachi, the last book in time and in place in the Old Testament.

offering, you must have a burnt offering; and prior to having true temporal peace with God, we must first have spiritual growth and fellowship with God. This is first obtained through the burnt and tribute offerings.

- b. Zevach (זֶבַח) [pronounced *ZEHb-vakh*] is one of the several words for *sacrifice*; its verb cognate meaning *to slaughter an animal for sacrifice*. Both of these words are found together in Ex. 24:5 29:28 Lev. 3:1, 3, 6, 9 4:10, 26, 31, 35 7:11, 13–15, 18. 20–21, 29, 32, 34, 37 and in many other passages.
2. See I Sam. 11:15

## **Sin Offerings**

**Lev. 4:1–5:13 6:24–30**

1. The

## **Offensive Offerings**

**Lev. 5:14–6:7 7:1–10**

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