



Leviticus - Chapter Six

I Leviticus 1:1-6:7 - Five Major Offerings (continues/concludes)

I.e Leviticus 5:14-6:7 - Offerings with Restitution (continues/concludes)

Summary of Chapter Six

The case in vv.1-7 indicates the necessity of making reparation both to the damaged neighbour and to the Lord, and that when a person is seeking the Lord's forgiveness, he must also correct the wrong committed against his neighbour.

Verses 8-13 are concerned with the continual burnt-offerings that were made every morning and every evening (Exodus 29:38-42). Verses 14-23 focuses on what the priests are required to do with the grain-offering, with vv.24-30 describing what they must do with the grain-offering.

¹ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ² When any of you sin and commit a trespass against the Lord by deceiving a neighbour in a matter of a deposit or a pledge, or by robbery, or if you have defrauded a neighbour, ³ or have found something lost and lied about it – if you swear falsely regarding any of the various things that one may do and sin thereby – ⁴ when you have sinned and realise your guilt, and would restore what you took by robbery or by fraud or the deposit that was committed to you, or the lost thing that you found, ⁵ or anything else about which you have sworn falsely, you shall repay the principal amount and shall add one-fifth to it. You shall pay it to its owner when you realise your guilt. ⁶ And you shall bring to the priest, as your guilt-

offering to the Lord, a ram without blemish from the flock, or its equivalent, for a guilt-offering.

Leviticus 6:1-6

Would restore what you took by robbery or by fraud or the deposit. If a person was guilty of fraud or theft, it was not enough that sacrifices cover the guilt of the sin before God. Restitution had to settle the account with the victim of the fraud: *<<Again, though I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die’, yet if they turn from their sin and do what is lawful and right – if the wicked restore the pledge, give back what they have taken by robbery, and walk in the statutes of life, committing no iniquity – they shall surely live, they shall not die>>* (Ezekiel 33:14-15), and: *<<Zacchæus stood there and said to the Lord, ‘Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much’>>* (Luke 19:8).

You shall repay the principal amount and shall add one-fifth to it. You shall pay it to its owner when you realise your guilt. It was not enough to just return what was stolen. The thief also had to add 20% (one-fifth, the current rate of UK VAT) to what was stolen as a penalty: *<<And you shall make restitution for the holy thing in which you were remiss, and shall add one-fifth to it and give it to the priest. The priest shall make atonement on your behalf with the ram of the guilt-offering, and you shall be forgiven>>* (Leviticus 5:16). Restitution and its accompanying penalty had to be made the same day the perpetrator realises the offence that has been committed. This powerfully demonstrated that one could not get right with God without also making his wrong right with men.

⁷ The priest shall make atonement on your behalf before the Lord, and you shall be forgiven for any of the things that one may do and incur guilt thereby.

Leviticus 6:7

The priest shall make atonement on your behalf before the Lord. This was marvellous assurance for a guilty conscience. The sinner could depend upon this promise and know their sin was covered before the Lord. The NT makes a similar statement in light of the New Covenant: *<<If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness>>* (1 John 1:9).

You shall be forgiven for any of the things that one may do and incur guilt thereby. The emphasis is that any sin can be cleansed through atoning sacrifice. Before the perfect work of Jesus on the Cross the cleansing was not perfect, but it could be extended to any sin. Grace has always been present!

II Leviticus 6:8-7:38 - Handling of the Offerings

This section focuses on issues related to the proper handling, eating, and disposal of the various sacrifices and offerings. The sacrifices and offerings are either 'holy' or 'most holy' and must therefore be treated with due respect. If this was not done, the offering would not count and the offender would remain in their guilt.

II.a Leviticus 6:8-7:10 - Instructions concerning Sacrifices

These verses provided more detailed instructions for the priests with regard to burnt, sin, grain, and guilt-offerings

⁸ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ⁹ Command Aaron and his sons, saying: This is the ritual of the burnt-offering. The burnt-offering itself shall remain on the hearth upon the altar all night until the morning, while the fire on the altar shall be kept burning. ¹⁰ The priest shall put on his linen vestments after putting on his linen undergarments next to his body; and he shall take up the ashes to which the fire has reduced the burnt-offering on the altar, and place them beside the altar. ¹¹ Then he shall take off his vestments and put on other garments, and carry the ashes out to a clean place outside the camp. ¹² The fire on the altar shall be kept burning; it shall not go out. Every morning the priest shall add wood to it, lay out the burnt-offering on it, and turn into smoke the fat pieces of the offerings of well-being. ¹³ A perpetual fire shall be kept burning on the altar; it shall not go out.

Leviticus 6:8-13

This is the ritual of the burnt-offering. This offering spoke of consecration. The animal had to remain upon the altar in a slow burn for a long time, tended by the priest, i.e. shall remain on the hearth upon the altar all night until the morning. It explains how the ashes of this offering are to be handled each morning, which requires the proper attire for the activities both inside (v.10) and outside (v.11) the tabernacle complex. This passage also underscores that the fire on the altar shall be kept burning; this requirement would in turn serve as a special exhortation to the priests to be faithful in their duties so that the worship of the Lord could continue without interruption.

The long-burning character of the burnt-offering is an appropriate illustration of the work of believers giving themselves completely to God. Coming to God as a living sacrifice is not a quick work and they may feel that they are roasted on the fire for a long time: *<<And I will put this third into the fire, refine them as*

one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The Lord is our God'>> (Zechariah 13:9), <<But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap>> (Malachi 3:2).

A perpetual fire shall be kept burning on the altar; it shall not go out. The perpetual fire is also connected to the idea that these offerings must be made continually. Before the perfect sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, it was impossible to perfectly complete them.

¹⁴ This is the ritual of the grain-offering: The sons of Aaron shall offer it before the Lord, in front of the altar. ¹⁵ They shall take from it a handful of the choice flour and oil of the grain-offering, with all the frankincense that is on the offering, and they shall turn its memorial portion into smoke on the altar as a pleasing odour to the Lord. ¹⁶ Aaron and his sons shall eat what is left of it; it shall be eaten as unleavened cakes in a holy place; in the court of the tent of meeting they shall eat it. ¹⁷ It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it as their portion of my offerings by fire; it is most holy, like the sin-offering and the guilt-offering. ¹⁸ Every male among the descendants of Aaron shall eat of it, as their perpetual due throughout your generations, from the Lord's offerings by fire; anything that touches them shall become holy.

Leviticus 6:14-18

This is the ritual of the grain-offering. After summarising the law of Chapter 2 in vv.14-15, these verses go on to underscore that the grain-offering is most holy and the remaining portion must therefore be eaten only by holy people, i.e. Aaron and his sons, in a holy place, that is, the court of the tent of meeting rather than the priest's home. God gave the priests this right as they would receive no material inheritance once they had entered the Promised Land: *<<This shall be their inheritance: I am their inheritance; and you shall give them no holding in Israel; I am their holding. They shall eat the grain-offering, the sin-offering, and the guilt-offering; and every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs>>* (Ezekiel 44:28-29). It was imperative that the most holy status of the grain-offering be respected.

¹⁹ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ²⁰ This is the offering that Aaron and his sons shall offer to the Lord on the day when he is anointed: one-tenth of an ephah of choice flour as a regular offering, half of it in

the morning and half in the evening. ²¹ It shall be made with oil on a griddle; you shall bring it well soaked, as a grain-offering of baked pieces, and you shall present it as a pleasing odour to the Lord. ²² And so the priest, anointed from among Aaron's descendants as a successor, shall prepare it; it is the Lord's — a perpetual due — to be turned entirely into smoke. ²³ Every grain-offering of a priest shall be wholly burned; it shall not be eaten.

Leviticus 6:19-23

These verses appear to describe a grain-offering, offered by Aaron and his sons, that was to begin at the inauguration of the priesthood and then to continue as a regular grain-offering; refer to Exodus 29:38-42. Since it appears that this was offered on behalf of the priests, it is not surprising that the high priest (the priest, from among Aaron's descendants) would do this, since he would represent the priests as a whole. These verses also remind the priests of their continual need for the Lord's favour.

One-tenth of an ephah of choice flour was probably around 3.5kgs and was therefore a substantial amount to offer.

Every grain-offering of a priest shall be wholly burned; it shall not be eaten.

There was a particular grain-offering that was part of the anointing and consecration ceremony for a priest. This grain-offering was not to be eaten, it was to be wholly burned before the Lord.

²⁴ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ²⁵ Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying: This is the ritual of the sin-offering. The sin-offering shall be slaughtered before the Lord at the spot where the burnt-offering is slaughtered; it is most holy. ²⁶ The priest who offers it as a sin-offering shall eat of it; it shall be eaten in a holy place, in the court of the tent of meeting. ²⁷ Whatever touches its flesh shall become holy; and when any of its blood is spattered on a garment, you shall wash the bespattered part in a holy place. ²⁸ An earthen vessel in which it was boiled shall be broken; but if it is boiled in a bronze vessel, that shall be scoured and rinsed in water. ²⁹ Every male among the priests shall eat of it; it is most holy. ³⁰ But no sin-offering shall be eaten from which any blood is brought into the tent of meeting for atonement in the holy place; it shall be burned with fire.

Leviticus 6:24-30

This is the ritual of the sin-offering. Chapter 4 has already indicated that the meat of the sin-offering is to be burned up when its blood has been taken into a holy place. These verses explain that the remaining meat of other sin-offerings (4:22-35) is to be eaten by holy people (the priests) in a holy place, i.e. the court of the tent of meeting.

A portion of the sin-offering was left over, and was to be given to the priests. Anything touched by the sin-offering or its blood had to be cleansed in a special manner because the sacrificial victim was thought to be infected with the sin of the one who brought the offering.

Blood spattered on a garment, boiled in an earthenware vessel, or boiled in a bronze vessel. Most interpreters believe that the blood itself was considered holy. Thus, the stipulations of vv.27-28 are to ensure that holy blood does not leave the holy place. Although the garment or the utensils that came into contact with the flesh became holy and had to be properly cleansed, it appears that this was not then transferred to secondary items that the garment or utensils may have come into contact with: <<*If one carries consecrated meat in the fold of one's garment, and with the fold touches bread, or stew, or wine, or oil, or any kind of food, does it become holy? The priests answered, 'No'*>> (Haggai 2:12).

But no sin-offering shall be eaten from which any blood is brought into the tent of meeting for atonement in the holy place. Any portion from the sin-offering made for national atonement could not be eaten. The whole animal had to be burnt before the Lord. Only portions from a sin-offering made on behalf of an individual could be eaten.