



Leviticus - Chapter Seven

II Leviticus 6:8-7:38 - Handling of the Offerings (continues/concludes)

II.a Leviticus 6:8-7:10 - Instructions concerning Sacrifices (continues/concludes)

Summary of Chapter Seven

The earlier passage (5:14-6:7) focused on when the guilt-offering was to be offered; vv.1-10 now focus on how it is to be offered. This is followed by further instructions with regard to the sin-offering and the chapter concludes with a summary of all the offerings described in 6:8-7:36.

¹ This is the ritual of the guilt-offering. It is most holy; ² at the spot where the burnt-offering is slaughtered, they shall slaughter the guilt-offering, and its blood shall be dashed against all sides of the altar.

³ All its fat shall be offered: the broad tail, the fat that covers the entrails, ⁴ the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins, and the appendage of the liver, which shall be removed with the kidneys. ⁵ The priest shall turn them into smoke on the altar as an offering by fire to the Lord; it is a guilt-offering. ⁶ Every male among the priests shall eat of it; it shall be eaten in a holy place; it is most holy.

Leviticus 7:1-6

This is the ritual of the guilt-offering. This ritual has some elements in common with each of the other offerings, but it is not identical to any of them. As in the sin-offering, the blood and fat belong to God with the remaining flesh goes to the priest and the other male members of the priesthood.

⁷ The guilt-offering is like the sin-offering, there is the same ritual for them; the priest who makes atonement with it shall have it. ⁸ So, too, the priest who offers anyone's burnt-offering shall keep the skin of the burnt-offering that he has offered. ⁹ And every grain-offering baked in the oven, and all that is prepared in a pan or on a griddle, shall belong to the priest who offers it. ¹⁰ But every other grain-offering, mixed with oil or dry, shall belong to all the sons of Aaron equally.

Leviticus 7:7-10

Having just described what portion of the guilt-offering the priest receives, these verses now proceed to discuss what portion the priest receives from the burnt-offering and the grain-offering.

Shall belong to all the sons of Aaron equally. The distribution was the responsibility of the officiating priest, but they were supposed to make sure that portions were distributed equally: <<*Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is sacrificed on the altar?*>> (1 Corinthians 9:13).

II.b Leviticus 7:11-38 - Further Instructions

The peace-offering is subdivided into three types, according to their associated motivations: thanksgiving in response to God's favour toward the offerer, a vow in fulfilment of a vow, and freewill, when there is no specific obligation to make an offering. The chapter concludes with a summary of all the offerings.

¹¹ This is the ritual of the sacrifice of the offering of well-being that one may offer to the Lord. ¹² If you offer it for thanksgiving, you shall offer with the thank-offering unleavened cakes mixed with oil, unleavened wafers spread with oil, and cakes of choice flour well soaked in oil. ¹³ With your thanksgiving sacrifice of well-being you shall bring your offering with cakes of leavened bread. ¹⁴ From this you shall offer one cake from each offering, as a gift to the Lord; it shall belong to the priest who dashes the blood of the offering of well-being. ¹⁵ And the flesh of your thanksgiving sacrifice of well-being shall be eaten on the day it is offered; you shall not leave any of it until morning. ¹⁶ But if the sacrifice you offer is a votive offering or a freewill-offering, it shall be eaten on the day that you offer your sacrifice, and what is left of it shall be eaten the next day; ¹⁷ but what is left of the flesh of the sacrifice shall be burned on the third day. ¹⁸ If any of the flesh of your

sacrifice of well-being is eaten on the third day, it shall not be acceptable, nor shall it be credited to the one who offers it; it shall be an abomination, and the one who eats of it shall incur guilt.

Leviticus 7:11-18

This is the ritual of the sacrifice of the offering of well-being. A peace-offering could be brought out of thanksgiving, out of a desire for fellowship with God, or on the occasion of the fulfilment of a votive offering or a freewill-offering. Warnings were also issued in Scripture for those who would choose to make a votive offering or vow: *<<If you make a vow to the Lord your God, do not postpone fulfilling it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and you would incur guilt. But if you refrain from vowing, you will not incur guilt. Whatever your lips utter you must diligently perform, just as you have freely vowed to the Lord your God with your own mouth>>* (Deuteronomy 23:21-23).

If any of the flesh of your sacrifice of well-being is eaten on the third day, it shall not be acceptable. The meat from a peace-offering had to be eaten in a fellowship meal within three days. God did not want stale fellowship.

¹⁹ Flesh that touches any unclean thing shall not be eaten; it shall be burned. As for other flesh, all who are clean may eat such flesh. ²⁰ But those who eat flesh from the Lord's sacrifice of well-being while in a state of uncleanness shall be cut off from their kin. ²¹ When any one of you touches any unclean thing – human uncleanness or an unclean animal or any unclean creature – and then eats flesh from the Lord's sacrifice of well-being, you shall be cut off from your kin.

Leviticus 7:19-21

All who are clean may eat such flesh. Ceremonial purity was required of anyone who wanted to participate in the fellowship meal associated with the peace-offering. This illustrates the principle that one cannot enjoy the peace of God until one has received his cleansing grace.

But those who eat flesh from the Lord's sacrifice of well-being while in a state of uncleanness shall be cut off from their kin. The fat, speaking of the good and the abundance, and the blood, speaking of the life, belonged to God, and had to be given to him.

Cut off from their kin. Some understand this to mean that the person is isolated from his relatives and family. Others, however, note that it is associated elsewhere with death, for example: *<<You shall keep the sabbath, because it is holy for you; everyone who profanes it shall be put to death; whoever does any work on it shall be cut off from among the people>>* (Exodus 31:14), and:

<<You must not let the tribe of the clans of the Kohathites be destroyed from among the Levites. This is how you must deal with them in order that they may live and not die when they come near to the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in and assign each to a particular task or burden. But the Kohathites must not go in to look on the holy things even for a moment; otherwise they will die>> (Numbers 4:18-20), and thus conclude that it refers to the premature death of the sinner by natural causes or as the result of capital punishment. In either case, it was a severe penalty indeed.

²² The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ²³ Speak to the people of Israel, saying: You shall eat no fat of ox or sheep or goat. ²⁴ The fat of an animal that died or was torn by wild animals may be put to any use, except that you must not eat it. ²⁵ If any one of you eats the fat from an animal of which an offering by fire may be made to the Lord, you who eat it shall be cut off from your kin. ²⁶ You must not eat any blood whatever, either of bird or of animal, in any of your settlements. ²⁷ Any one of you who eats any blood shall be cut off from your kin.

Leviticus 7:22-27

You shall eat no fat of ox or sheep or goat. God's peace is enjoyed by giving him the best, represented here by the fat portion, and by offerers giving him their lives, represented by the blood.

The fat of an animal that died or was torn by wild animals may be put to any use, except that you must not eat it. Animals had to be slaughtered in the appropriate fashion in order to be acceptable to the Lord. When they die by another means, or if they are imperfect, their fat may not be eaten as it still remains the part that belongs to God even though it can no longer be offered to him because of its means of death. The people had also been instructed never to eat the flesh of an animal that had died other than in the manner prescribed: *<<You shall be people consecrated to me; therefore you shall not eat any meat that is mangled by beasts in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs>>* (Exodus 22:31).

²⁸ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ²⁹ Speak to the people of Israel, saying: Any one of you who would offer to the Lord your sacrifice of well-being must yourself bring to the Lord your offering from your sacrifice of well-being. ³⁰ Your own hands shall bring the Lord's offering by fire; you shall bring the fat with the breast, so that the breast may be raised as an elevation-offering before the Lord. ³¹ The priest shall turn the fat into smoke on the altar, but the breast shall

belong to Aaron and his sons.³² And the right thigh from your sacrifices of well-being you shall give to the priest as an offering;³³ the one among the sons of Aaron who offers the blood and fat of the offering of well-being shall have the right thigh for a portion.³⁴ For I have taken the breast of the elevation-offering, and the thigh that is offered, from the people of Israel, from their sacrifices of well-being, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons, as a perpetual due from the people of Israel.³⁵ This is the portion allotted to Aaron and to his sons from the offerings made by fire to the Lord, once they have been brought forward to serve the Lord as priests;³⁶ these the Lord commanded to be given them, when he anointed them, as a perpetual due from the people of Israel throughout their generations.

Leviticus 7:28-36

Your own hands shall bring the Lord's offering by fire; you shall bring the fat with the breast, so that the breast may be raised as an elevation-offering before the Lord. In the wave or elevation-offering the breast and right thigh, the choicest parts of an animal, go to the priests as a wave-offering and a contribution. This was a specific waving of the portion of meat or bread dedicated to the Lord, waving it before the Lord in a specific pattern. In this way, even though the priest kept the portion, he had still dedicated it unto God: <<*You shall also take the fat of the ram, the fat-tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the appendage of the liver, the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, and the right thigh (for it is a ram of ordination), and one loaf of bread, one cake of bread made with oil, and one wafer, out of the basket of unleavened bread that is before the Lord; and you shall place all these on the palms of Aaron and on the palms of his sons, and raise them as an elevation-offering before the Lord*>> (Exodus 29:22-24).

They have been brought forward to serve the Lord as priests. The reference to their anointing anticipates Chapter 8, on their ordination.

³⁷ This is the ritual of the burnt-offering, the grain-offering, the sin-offering, the guilt-offering, the offering of ordination, and the sacrifice of well-being,³⁸ which the Lord commanded Moses on Mount Sinai, when he commanded the people of Israel to bring their offerings to the Lord, in the wilderness of Sinai.

Leviticus 7:37-38

These verses form a summary statement concluding the details of this and the preceding chapter.