

Handout 1: Leviticus Lesson 2

In Lesson 1 we discussed two of the three covenant members' voluntary offerings given by divine instruction in Leviticus chapters one and two: the *'olah* "whole burnt offering," and the *minhah* "loyalty gift" offering of grain.

How is the "whole burnt offering" (*'olah*) related to Jesus Christ and to us?

1. Jesus surrendered His entire life to God. He offered up His human life and flesh to be completely consumed on the altar of the Cross (Heb 9:13-14; 10:4-10).
2. Everyone who accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior is also a "whole burnt offering." Having been united to His sacrifice, we acknowledging that everything we have and everything we are belongs to God for the advancement of His kingdom (Rom 12:1).

How is the "loyalty gift" (*minhah*) related to Jesus Christ and to us?

1. Jesus offered Himself in complete obedience and submission to the will of God (Mt 26:42).
2. In our communal and individual gifts brought to the altar we acknowledge our connection to Christ's sacrifice, our submission to God, and our union with the covenant community (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 10:31; 12:12-27; Col 1:10).

The third form of voluntary sacrifices that could be offered by covenant members was the "sacrifice of peace", in Hebrew *zevach ha-shelamim*. Communion sacrifices and the resulting sacred meal shared between God, the offerer, the priests and covenant members could be offered in three forms:

1. The *todah* "thanksgiving" offering (Lev 7:11-15/ 7:1-5)
2. The *nedavah* "voluntary offering" (Lev 7:16-17/ 6-7)
3. The *neder* "vow offering" (Lev 7:16-17/ 6-7)

All of these communion sacrifices and their resulting sacred meals looked forward to the coming of the promised Redeemer-Messiah, the redemption of God's people, and the future promise of a shared sacred banquet of the righteous with God and the heavenly assembly. It became a Jewish tradition that when the Messiah came all sacrifices would cease with the exception of the *todah*, the peace offering of "thanksgiving": *According to rabbinic teaching, it would continue to be offered in the messianic era, when the rest of the sacrificial system was no longer operative (JPS Commentary: Leviticus, page 43).*

The five different classes of sin sacrifices and the required sacrificial offering:

1. For a high priest an unblemished young bull
2. For the covenant community an unblemished young bull
3. For a leader/ruler of the community an unblemished he-goat
4. For an individual covenant member an unblemished she-goat or ewe lamb
5. For the poor two turtledoves or two young pigeons and for the destitute a tenth of an ephah of wheat flour (1 ephah = 1.25 bushels or 45 liters)

Two distinctive features of the Sinai Covenant not found in pagan culture: (1) a god in covenant with a people, and (2) the blood ritual in animal sacrifice. Prohibitions against consuming fat, raw flesh or blood are found seven times in Scripture: Gen 9:4; Lev 3:17; 7:25-27/15-17; 17:10-12, 14; Dt 12:16, and 23-28.

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The Old Covenant communion “peace offerings” (*zevah ha-shelamim*) and the sacred communion meal are related to Jesus Christ and to us.

1. Jesus is our “peace offering.” Through His sacrifice on the altar of the Cross and the “pouring out” of His Blood, He has made reconciliation to God for us and has brought us into a place where we can draw near and to have free access to God (Eph 2:14-18).
2. Through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ in offering up His life on the Cross, all things have been reconciled through him. By joining ourselves to His sacrifice we can enter into God’s peace (Col 1:20) because He has reconciled us to God: *We have been justified by faith and are at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ* (Rom 5:1).
3. In the celebration of the Eucharist, Christ is our *todah*, our “thanksgiving” (Eucharist) communion offering (Lev 7:11-15/ 7:1-5). It is through His sacrifice, made present on the altar of every Catholic Church in the sacrifice of the Mass and through our “voluntary offering” of the bread and wine (*nedavah*) that we are able to keep our covenant vows (*neder*) and take part in the sacred meal with our covenant family—when the bread and wine of the New Covenant *todah* becomes Jesus’ Body and Blood, restoring us to full fellowship with the Most Holy Trinity (Mt 26:26-29; 1 Cor 5:7-8; 10:16-17; 11:23-32).

To “pour out” the blood of the sacrifice is a liturgical instruction used eight times in Leviticus. In the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament this word is translated as *ekcheo*. The most significant use of the liturgical term *ekcheo*, “pour out,” in the New Testament is found in Jesus’ liturgical directions at the Last Supper:

1. *Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he handed it to them saying, ‘Drink from this, all of you, for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant poured out [ekcheo] for many for the forgiveness of sins’* (Mt 26:28).
2. *...and he said to them, ‘This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, poured out [ekcheo] for many* (Mk 14:24).
3. *He did the same with the cup after supper, and said, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood poured out [ekcheo] for you’* (Lk 22:20).

[] = literal translation; *The Interlinear Bible: Greek-English, vol. IV*, pages 81, 141, 235.

Other uses of *ekcheo* in the New Testament:

1. The spilling “pouring out” of wine in Matthew 9:17: *Nor do people put [ekcheo “pour out”] new wine into old wineskins...* (also see Mark 2:22 and Luke 5:37).
2. The shedding of the blood of the martyrs’ in Matthew 23:35 (Jesus’ warning to citizens of Jerusalem): *...and so you will bring down on yourselves the blood of every upright person that has been shed [ekcheo “poured out] on earth, from the blood of Abel the holy to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. In truth I tell you, it will all recoil on this generation* (also see Luke 11:50; Acts 22:20; Romans 3:15).
3. The “pouring out” of the Holy Spirit: *In the last days –the Lord declares—I shall **pour out** [ekcheo] my spirit on all humanity* (Acts 2:17a). *Even on the slaves, men and women, shall I **pour out** [ekcheo] my Spirit* Acts 2:18). *...he has received from the Father the Holy Spirit, who was promised, and what you see and hear is the **outpouring** [ekcheo] of that Spirit* (Acts 2:33).
4. Also see the use of *ekcheo* in Acts 10:45; Romans 5:5; Titus 3:6 and the multiple references in Revelation (14:10; 16:1-2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, and 17).