

The Book of Leviticus, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 4: The Portions of the Offerings

Leviticus 7:1-38

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Doctrinally, Leviticus 7 keeps two great truths in front of the class at once. First, sin is deadly serious and a holy God may be approached only on His own terms, by blood that He Himself provides. The guilt and sin offerings are 'most holy,' the unclean worshiper is cut off, and the blood is never to be treated as common. Second, this same God is astonishingly generous. He feeds His priests from the offerings, He invites the worshiper to a fellowship meal, and He turns the act of atonement into an occasion of thanksgiving and joy. Hold these together so the class sees both the severity and the kindness of God.

Be careful with the application. These ordinances were a shadow, fulfilled and taken out of the way in Christ (Colossians 2:14-17; Hebrews 9-10). We must not bind the guilt offering, the peace offering, or the fat-and-blood regulations on Christians as law. Instead we draw the timeless principles: the sanctity of blood and of life, the seriousness of sin, the call to come to God reverently and not casually, and God's design that those who serve at the altar be supported by it. Let Hebrews govern how you move from the tabernacle to the cross.

The lesson aims at the student's formation in three directions. It calls for gratitude, the thanksgiving offering eaten the same day rebukes our slow and grudging thanks. It calls for reverence, the cut-off warnings teach us not to drag uncleanness to God's table. And it calls for generosity, God's provision for the priests obligates the church to care for those who labor in the word. Aim the heart, not just the head: the student should leave more thankful, more reverent, and more openhanded.

Question 1

Student Question:

Leviticus 7:1-7 calls the guilt offering 'most holy' and gives it the same basic law as the sin offering. What do these opening verses teach us about how seriously God takes sin against Him and against our neighbor, and why does atonement require blood (compare Leviticus 17:11)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Leviticus 7 opens by returning to the guilt offering (sometimes called the trespass offering), which was introduced back in chapter 5. Here the emphasis falls on the procedure and on a striking phrase: it is 'most holy.' The same category that applies to the sin offering applies here. This is not a casual gift. It is holy business, handled by holy hands, in a holy place. The very vocabulary refuses to let sin be treated as a minor matter that can be settled with a shrug.

Verse 2 specifies that the animal is killed in the place where the burnt offering is killed, and its blood is sprinkled around the altar. The fat, the tail, the fat around the inner parts, the kidneys, and the lobe of the liver are burned to God. What remains is given to the officiating priest. Every step is regulated. The worshiper does not get to improvise. From the place of slaughter to the disposal of the blood, God specifies how a guilty person may be made right.

The reason blood stands at the center of it all is given plainly in Leviticus 17:11: 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.' Atonement is costly because life is costly. Sin is not erased by good intentions or sincere feelings. It requires a life laid down. The guilt offering preaches that lesson in blood every time it is performed.

This is where the chapter quietly points us forward. Hebrews 9 declares that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, and that the blood of bulls and goats could never finally take sins away. They covered, they pointed, they taught, but they could not perfect the conscience. The 'most holy' guilt offering was a finger pointing down the centuries to a cross, where the Lamb of God would be both the offering and the High Priest.

Help the class feel the weight here. We live in an age that loves to call sin a mistake, a stumble, a phase. Leviticus will not let us. Sin against God and neighbor is most holy business, and it cost blood. When we grasp that, the cross stops being a sentimental symbol and becomes the staggering, blood-bought rescue it truly is.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The guilt offering is 'most holy'; sin is serious business, not a triviality.
- Atonement requires blood because life itself is at stake (Leviticus 17:11).
- The procedure is wholly God-given; the worshiper does not invent his own way to be forgiven.
- Animal blood pointed forward; it could cover but not finally remove sin (Hebrews 10:4).
- Christ is both the once-for-all offering and our High Priest (Hebrews 9:11-14).

Discussion Prompts

- Why do you think God insists that atonement be made by blood rather than by mere remorse or resolve to do better?
- How does calling the guilt offering 'most holy' challenge the casual way our culture talks about sin?
- When you read these blood-soaked verses, how does it deepen your gratitude for the blood of Christ?

Question 2

Student Question:

When you think honestly about a recent wrong you have done, do you treat it as 'most holy' business that demands real repentance, or do you tend to brush it aside? What would it look like for you to take your own sin as seriously as God does?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns the searchlight inward. Israel could not treat the guilt offering as a formality, and we cannot treat repentance as a formality either. The danger for religious people is not usually open rebellion. It is a slow drift into treating our sins as small, manageable, and basically forgivable without much fuss. Leviticus interrupts that drift.

Real repentance, in both Testaments, involves naming the wrong honestly, turning from it, and where possible making restitution. The guilt offering itself often went hand in hand with paying back what had been taken plus a fifth (Leviticus 6:5). Godly sorrow does not merely feel bad; it changes direction and, where it can, repairs the damage. That is a far cry from a quick 'sorry' that costs us nothing.

Encourage the class to get specific. Vague guilt produces vague repentance, which produces no change at all. The student who can name a particular wrong, a sharp word, a dishonest dealing, a neglected duty, is the student positioned to actually turn. Leviticus trains us to bring our sin out into the light of God's holiness rather than leaving it in the comfortable dark.

And remember the good news that frames the demand. We take sin seriously precisely because there is a remedy. We do not wallow in shame; we run to the cross. The seriousness of the guilt offering was always paired with the mercy of atonement. So the goal of this self-examination is not despair but honest, hopeful repentance that leads us to Christ.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Religious people drift toward treating sin as small and easily excused.
- Biblical repentance names the wrong, turns from it, and repairs where possible.
- Specific confession leads to real change; vague guilt leads nowhere.
- We take sin seriously because there is a remedy, not to wallow in shame.

Discussion Prompts

- Where have you been tempted to brush a particular sin aside instead of dealing with it honestly?
- What is the difference between feeling bad about sin and actually turning from it?
- How does the certainty of forgiveness in Christ free you to be honest about your sin rather than hiding it?

Question 3

Student Question:

Leviticus 7:11-18 distinguishes the thanksgiving peace offering, which had to be eaten the same day, from the vow or freewill offering. What does this offering teach about gratitude and fellowship with God, and why might thanksgiving be set apart with such urgency?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Leviticus 7:11-18 turns from atonement to fellowship. The peace offering (or fellowship offering) was unique because the worshiper got to eat much of it. It produced a meal shared in God's presence, a picture of restored fellowship between God and His people. Three occasions are named: thanksgiving, a vow, and a freewill offering. The thanksgiving variety carries a special urgency.

The thanksgiving peace offering had to be eaten on the same day it was offered. Nothing could be left until morning. The vow and freewill offerings could be eaten over two days. Why the difference? Thanksgiving, by its nature, is meant to be fresh and immediate. Gratitude that we postpone tends to cool and curdle. God builds into the very rules a lesson about thanking Him promptly and wholeheartedly while the blessing is still warm in our hearts.

This offering also came with an abundance of bread, both unleavened and leavened cakes, signaling celebration and plenty. It was a joyful feast, not a grim ritual. The worshiper, his family, the priests, and often the poor and the Levites shared in it. Fellowship with God overflowed into fellowship with people. The vertical and the horizontal were knit together at one table.

For the church, the principle is rich. We are a people who gather around a table too, the Lord's Supper, week by week, in thankful fellowship with God and one another. We are commanded in everything to give thanks. The peace offering trains us to see gratitude not as an optional nicety but as a central, urgent, joyful response to the God who has made peace with us through Christ.

Notice that the peace offering followed atonement. You cannot have fellowship with God while your sin stands between you. First the blood, then the feast. The order matters. Only because peace has been made can there be a meal of thanksgiving. So too for us: reconciliation through the blood of Christ comes first, and joyful, grateful fellowship flows out of it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The peace offering produced a shared meal, picturing restored fellowship with God.
- Thanksgiving had to be eaten the same day; gratitude is meant to be prompt and fresh.
- Abundant bread marked it as a joyful celebration, not a grim ritual.
- Fellowship with God overflowed into fellowship with family, priests, and the poor.
- Atonement comes first, then the feast; peace with God precedes the meal.

Discussion Prompts

- Why do you think God required the thanksgiving offering to be eaten the very same day?

- How does the order of the offerings, atonement before fellowship, shape the way we approach God?
- In what ways does the Lord's Supper echo the joyful, thankful fellowship of the peace offering?

Question 4

Student Question:

When God blesses you, how quickly do you turn to give Him thanks? Describe one specific blessing you have been slow to thank Him for, and how you will express that gratitude this week.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The thanksgiving offering presses a simple, searching question: how quickly do you thank God? Most of us are quick to ask and slow to thank. We pray hard for the sick child, then forget to circle back with praise when the fever breaks. We beg for the job, then move on to the next worry once it comes. The same-day rule for the thanksgiving offering is a gentle rebuke to our delayed gratitude.

Gratitude is a discipline before it is a feeling. We can choose to count blessings, to name them out loud, to thank God specifically rather than generally. 'Thank You for everything' is fine, but 'Thank You for healing my mother, for the friend who called, for daily bread on the table' is the kind of fresh, particular thanksgiving the peace offering models.

Encourage students to pick one real blessing they have been slow to thank God for, and to plan a concrete act of gratitude this week. Perhaps a prayer of thanks, perhaps telling someone what God has done, perhaps a gift given in His name. Gratitude that stays inside the head evaporates. Gratitude expressed takes root and grows.

There is freedom in this. A grateful heart is a contented heart. The person who learns to thank God promptly is far less likely to be eaten up by envy, anxiety, and entitlement. The same-day feast was not a burden God laid on Israel; it was a gift that kept their hearts soft and joyful before Him.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- We are quick to ask God and slow to thank Him.
- Gratitude is a discipline we can choose, not merely a feeling we wait for.
- Specific, named thanks roots deeper than vague gratitude.
- Expressed gratitude grows; unexpressed gratitude evaporates.

Discussion Prompts

- What is one blessing you have been slow to thank God for, and why?
- How might you build prompt, specific thanksgiving into your daily walk with God?

- How does a grateful heart guard you against envy and anxiety?

Question 5

Student Question:

Leviticus 7:19–21 warns that anyone unclean who eats the peace offering is to be 'cut off from his people.' Why does God attach such severe consequences to approaching Him in an unclean state, and what does this say about His holiness?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Leviticus 7:19–21 carries a sobering edge. The peace offering meat must not be eaten by anyone in a state of uncleanness, and anyone who does so 'shall be cut off from his people.' To be cut off was a grave matter, signifying separation from the covenant community and from the privileges of God's people. The fellowship meal was holy, and holiness could not be casually trampled.

This warning guards a vital truth: the same God who invites us to the table is utterly holy, and we cannot approach Him on our own careless terms. Fellowship with God is a glorious privilege, but it is never a casual one. The worshiper had to come clean. Uncleanness and the holy table could not mix. God's invitation and God's holiness are held together, not played against each other.

We must not flatten this into mere ritual fussiness. The ceremonial cleanness laws were teaching Israel, in vivid object lessons, that the holy and the unclean cannot simply coexist in God's presence. They were training a people to grasp that approaching God requires reverence and preparation of heart. The outward washing pointed to an inward reality God ultimately desired.

For Christians, the principle carries straight through. Paul warns the Corinthians that to eat the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner is to be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and he calls for self-examination. We do not come to God's table clutching unrepented sin as though His holiness did not matter. The cut-off warning of Leviticus and the self-examination of 1 Corinthians 11 sing the same note: come to the holy table with a clean and reverent heart.

Yet hear the grace under the warning. God did not bar Israel from His table; He simply taught them to come rightly. The provision for cleansing was always available. So too with us: the blood of Christ cleanses us so that we may draw near with confidence. The warning is not meant to keep us away but to teach us to come the right way.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The fellowship meal was holy; uncleanness and the holy table could not mix.
- To be 'cut off' meant grave separation from the covenant community.

- God's invitation to fellowship never cancels His holiness.
- Paul applies the same principle to the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:27–29).
- Provision for cleansing was always available; the warning teaches us to come rightly, not to stay away.

Discussion Prompts

- Why does God attach such serious consequences to approaching His table while unclean?
- How does this passage shape the way we ought to come to the Lord's Supper?
- How do God's invitation and God's holiness fit together rather than contradict each other?

Question 6

Student Question:

Are there areas of compromise in your life that you have allowed to sit beside your worship, as though you could come to God's table while clinging to something unclean? What is the Lord asking you to put away?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The cut-off warning pushes us to honest self-inventory. Are there areas of compromise we have allowed to sit comfortably beside our worship? We can become skilled at compartmentalizing, singing on the Lord's Day while nursing a grudge, taking the Supper while clinging to a habit we know dishonors God. Leviticus says the unclean and the holy table do not belong together.

This is not a call to morbid introspection that paralyzes us, nor to a perfectionism that says we must be flawless before we dare approach God. It is a call to honesty and repentance. The question is not whether we have sin, but whether we are clinging to it, refusing to let it go, dragging it knowingly to God's presence as though He would not notice or mind.

Encourage the class to name something specific the Lord may be asking them to put away. A pattern of speech, a resentment, a private indulgence, a divided loyalty. Naming it is the first step to surrendering it. The vague sense that 'I could be better' rarely changes anyone. The specific decision to put away one thing, by God's grace, often changes everything.

And remember, the goal is restored fellowship, not endless guilt. God cleanses us not so we can feel perpetually condemned but so we can sit at His table with joy. Putting away the unclean thing is the path back to the feast, not a punishment that keeps us from it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- We can compartmentalize, worshiping while clinging to known compromise.
- The call is to honest repentance, not paralyzing perfectionism.
- Naming a specific sin is the first step to surrendering it.
- The aim is restored fellowship and joy, not perpetual guilt.

Discussion Prompts

- What compromise have you allowed to sit beside your worship without dealing with it?
- Why is naming a specific sin more powerful than a vague wish to do better?
- How does remembering God's desire for fellowship motivate you to put away what is unclean?

Question 7

Student Question:

Leviticus 7:22-27 forbids eating fat and blood, on pain of being cut off. What reasons does Scripture give for the sanctity of blood (Leviticus 17:11,14), and how does this prepare us to understand the preciousness of the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Leviticus 7:22-27 contains one of the chapter's most emphatic commands: Israel must eat neither fat nor blood, and the penalty for eating blood is again to be cut off. The fat was regarded as the richest, best part, and it belonged to God. The blood was never to be consumed at all. These were not arbitrary dietary quirks; they were deep theological signposts.

The fat belonged to God because the best is His by right. To eat the fat would be to seize for ourselves what God had claimed as His portion. There is a quiet but powerful lesson here about giving God the first and the best rather than the leftovers. The fat going up in smoke declared that God deserves the richest part of all we have.

The blood carried even greater weight, for as Leviticus 17:11,14 explains, the life is in the blood, and God reserved it for the altar to make atonement. To treat blood casually would be to treat life casually, and life belongs to God. The prohibition trained Israel across centuries to regard blood, and the life it represented, as sacred and untouchable, set apart for God's purposes alone.

This is the soil out of which the New Testament's language about the blood of Christ grows. When Peter writes that we were redeemed 'not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot,' he is drawing on centuries of teaching that blood is precious, life-bearing, and atoning. The reverence Israel learned at the altar prepares us to stand in awe at the cross.

Help the class connect the threads. Every time an Israelite refused to eat blood, he was being trained to see that blood means life, and life belongs to God. So when the Lamb of God shed His blood, those with eyes to see understood the staggering cost: a life poured out, the most precious thing in the universe, given to redeem us. The fat-and-blood law was a long preparation for Calvary.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The fat, the richest part, belonged to God; He deserves the best, not the leftovers.
- Blood was never to be eaten because the life is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11,14).
- Treating blood casually would mean treating God-given life casually.
- These laws trained Israel to regard blood and life as sacred.
- This prepares us to grasp the preciousness of the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Discussion Prompts

- Why do you think God reserved both the fat and the blood for Himself?
- How does the prohibition against eating blood teach the sanctity of life?
- How does Israel's reverence for blood deepen your awe at the blood Jesus shed for you?

Question 8

Student Question:

Reverence for the blood reminds us that life belongs to God. In what practical ways can you treat human life, your own and others', as sacred and belonging to God this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

If life belongs to God, then how we treat life, our own and others', becomes a matter of worship. The reverence Israel learned at the altar was meant to ripple out into the whole of life. We who claim to honor the blood of Christ cannot be careless with the human lives He bled to redeem.

Treating life as sacred shows up in concrete ways. It shapes how we speak of people made in God's image, refusing contempt and cruelty. It shapes how we guard our own bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit, not abusing them. It shapes how we defend the vulnerable, the unborn, the elderly, the weak, whose lives the world is quick to devalue. Reverence for the Giver of life translates into reverence for life itself.

Encourage the class to think practically and personally. Perhaps it means refusing a habit that harms the body God gave. Perhaps it means honoring a difficult person rather than writing them off. Perhaps it means a tangible act of care for someone whose life the world overlooks. The sanctity of life is not an abstract slogan; it is lived out in a thousand daily choices.

Above all, treating life as sacred flows from gratitude. The God who gave us life, and gave His Son's life to redeem ours, calls us to hold all life in honor. When we remember the price paid, we cannot shrug at the lives around us. We treat them as what they are: precious to the God who made them and died for them.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- If life belongs to God, how we treat life becomes a matter of worship.
- Reverence for life shapes our speech, our care for our bodies, and our defense of the vulnerable.
- The sanctity of life is lived out in concrete daily choices, not abstract slogans.
- Honoring life flows from gratitude for the life God gave and the life Christ gave.

Discussion Prompts

- What does it look like, practically, to treat your own body and life as belonging to God?
- Whose life does the world tend to devalue, and how can you honor them this week?
- How does the price of redemption change the way you view the people around you?

Question 9

Student Question:

Leviticus 7:28–36 gives the wave breast and the heave thigh to Aaron and his sons as their perpetual portion. How does God's provision for the priests anchor Paul's teaching that those who serve at the altar should live by the altar (1 Corinthians 9:13–14), and what does this require of the Lord's church regarding those who labor in the word?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Leviticus 7:28–36 turns to the priests' perpetual portion. The breast, which was waved before the LORD, and the right thigh, which was lifted up (the heave offering), were given to Aaron and his sons as their due, a statute forever throughout their generations. The priests who served the people at the altar were fed from the offerings the people brought. God built provision for His servants into the very system of worship.

This was not a reward for ambition or a salary the priests negotiated. It was God's design. The Levites and priests received no inheritance of land like the other tribes; the LORD Himself was their portion, and the offerings were their livelihood. God saw to it that those who gave their lives to the service of the sanctuary would not go hungry. The arrangement protected both the dignity of the work and the welfare of the workers.

The apostle Paul reaches back to exactly this principle in 1 Corinthians 9. He asks, 'Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.' The logic is direct: as God provided for the priests from the altar, so the Lord has ordained that those who preach the gospel be supported by the church.

This places a real obligation on the Lord's church. We are to care for those who labor in the word and doctrine, to count them worthy of support, and not to muzzle the ox that treads out the grain (1 Timothy 5:17–18, which itself quotes the law). Generosity toward gospel workers is

not charity we may offer or withhold at whim; it is a principle woven into how God has always ordered the support of His servants. A congregation that neglects this neglects God's own design.

At the same time, notice the heart behind it. God's provision for the priests reveals a God who cares for His servants, who does not call people to sacrifice without also sustaining them. The same Father who demands holiness also feeds His household. As we support those who serve, we are reflecting the character of the God who has always provided for those who stand at His altar. And we do well to remember that the priesthood itself was a shadow, fulfilled in Christ our great High Priest, who needs no provision from us but graciously feeds us all from His own table.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The wave breast and heave thigh were the priests' perpetual portion by God's design.
- Priests received no land inheritance; the LORD and His offerings were their portion.
- Paul grounds support of gospel preachers in this very principle (1 Corinthians 9:13–14).
- Caring for those who labor in the word is God's ordinance, not optional charity (1 Timothy 5:17–18).
- God's provision reveals a Father who sustains those He calls to serve.
- The Aaronic priesthood was a shadow fulfilled in Christ our High Priest (Hebrews 7–8).

Discussion Prompts

- How does God's provision for the priests show His care for those who serve Him?
- Why does Paul treat the support of gospel preachers as a divine ordinance rather than mere generosity?
- What concrete responsibility does this place on a faithful congregation today?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the whole chapter, with its portions for God, for the priest, and for the worshiper. Name one specific way the Lord is using this passage to form you into a more grateful, reverent, and generous follower of Jesus, our great High Priest who offered Himself once for all.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Now step back and take in the whole chapter. Leviticus 7 has walked us through portions for God, portions for the priest, and portions for the worshiper. Along the way it has preached the seriousness of sin, the sanctity of blood and life, the urgency of thanksgiving, the holiness of God's table, and the goodness of a God who feeds His servants. It is a chapter about how a holy God is approached and how generously He provides.

The thread that ties it all together leads straight to Jesus. He is the once-for-all offering that the guilt and sin offerings only foreshadowed. He is the peace by which we have fellowship with God, the true peace offering at whose table we feast. He is our great High Priest, who needs no portion from us but feeds us from Himself. Every portion in Leviticus 7 finds its fullness in Him.

So the capstone question is personal: how is the Lord using this chapter to form you? Perhaps toward deeper gratitude, refusing to let your thanks go cold. Perhaps toward greater reverence, coming to God's table with a clean heart. Perhaps toward open-handed generosity, supporting those who serve. Perhaps toward awe at the blood that redeemed you. Name the one specific way Jesus is shaping you, and ask Him to make it real.

The point of Leviticus was never to leave us admiring ancient rituals. It was to train hearts to know a holy and gracious God, and to send us, through the shadows, to the substance who is Christ. Let this chapter do its work: make you more grateful, more reverent, more generous, and more in love with the High Priest who offered Himself for you.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The chapter weaves together seriousness of sin, sanctity of life, thanksgiving, and God's provision.
- Every portion finds its fullness in Christ, our offering, our peace, and our High Priest.
- The aim is real formation: gratitude, reverence, generosity, and awe.
- Leviticus sends us through the shadows to the substance, who is Jesus.

Discussion Prompts

- Which portion of this chapter spoke most directly to your own heart, and why?
- Name one specific way Jesus is forming you through this passage.
- How will you respond this week so that this lesson produces real change, not just admiration?