

The Book of Leviticus

Lesson 4: The Portions of the Offerings -- Leviticus 7:1–38

Picture the priests at the end of a long day at the tabernacle. The smoke of the offerings is still rising, the bronze altar is warm, and the courtyard smells of roasted meat and burning fat. People have streamed in all day, each one bringing a sacrifice with a story behind it. One man came trembling because he had wronged his neighbor. A family came laughing because a sick child had recovered. A young couple came simply to say thank you to the God who had been good to them. Leviticus 7 walks us back into that courtyard and tells us what happened to every animal after the worshiper laid his hand on its head. It is a chapter about portions, about who gets what, and it turns out that even the leftover details are soaked with the goodness and holiness of God.

On the surface this looks like an accountant's chapter. Here are the rules for the guilt offering. Here are the rules for the peace offering. Here is the part that goes up in smoke to God, here is the part the priest may eat, here is the part the worshiper takes home to feast with his family. Twice the chapter stops and warns, with real heat, that no one is ever to eat fat or blood. It can feel like reading the fine print of an ancient contract. But slow down, because God does not waste a single verse. Every portion that He assigns is a sermon about how a holy God may be approached and about how generously He cares for the people who come near.

Notice especially how God provides for those who serve at the altar. The priest who carries the burden of the people's sins also carries home bread for his children. Centuries later Paul would lean on exactly this principle when he wrote that those who serve at the altar share in the altar's offerings, and that the Lord commanded those who preach the gospel to live by the gospel. The fat belongs to God, the blood belongs to God, and the servant of God is fed by the gifts of God. Worship in Israel was never a cold transaction. It was a table, a fire, and a fellowship, all ordered by a Father who knew exactly how He wanted to be approached.

We do not bring bulls and rams to a tabernacle anymore, and we must be careful never to bind these ceremonies on Christians as though the cross had not happened. The book of Hebrews is clear that all of this was a shadow, and that the body casting the shadow is Jesus. Yet the shadow still teaches us. As we read about blood that must never be treated casually, about fat that belongs to God alone, about thanksgiving that overflows into a shared meal, we are being trained to see the seriousness of sin, the sanctity of life, and the joy of fellowship with the Lord. Walk into this courtyard slowly. Every portion is pointing you toward the One who offered Himself once for all.

Group Discussion: Leviticus 7 carefully assigns a portion to God, a portion to the priest, and a portion to the worshiper. What does this careful dividing of every offering reveal about who God

is and how He wants to be approached, and where do you see those same truths at work in the worship of the Lord's church today?

Personal Reflection: The chapter twice insists that the fat and the blood belong to God alone. Is there some part of your life, your time, your money, or your loyalty that you have been quietly keeping back as your portion rather than surrendering it to the Lord?

Read Leviticus 7:1–38

Study Questions

1. 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)?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. 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.

5. 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?
6. 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?
7. 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)?
8. 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?
9. 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?
10. 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.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: 1 Corinthians 9:13–14, those who serve at the altar share in the altar, grounding support for gospel preachers; Hebrews 9:11–14, the blood of Christ offered once cleanses the conscience where animal blood could not; 1 Peter 1:18–19, redeemed not with silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ; Leviticus 17:11, the life of the flesh is in the blood, given to make atonement; Colossians 2:14–17, the ceremonial law was a shadow whose substance belongs to Christ

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