

## The Offering of Thanks

Leviticus 22:29-33

November 30, 2008

### Intro

The book of Leviticus was a book that instructed Israel in regards to their relationship with God. There was to be a distinct relationship between Israel and the Lord because His presence was to be with them as they entered into the land that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He was the Lord *their* God and that meant that they were to be different than the people around them and as we studied last week, there were a number of things that they were not to do that the countries around them were doing, and there many things that they were asked to do for God that other nations were not asked to do.

As we near the end of the book of Leviticus, we see that God is giving instructions for many things that related to their everyday lives that were good for them; good for their health, for their cleanliness, and for their hearts.

That's what we see in the verses that we are studying today. Here in these verses, God is reminding them of the sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord; and how appropriate for us to study these verses since we just celebrated Thanksgiving this week. It's interesting to see that they also had a thanksgiving meal and there are some interesting lessons for our application as we see what God had in mind for them in the offering of thanksgiving.

Their thanksgiving dinner certainly did not include turkey, but it is an interesting coincidence that the Hebrew word, Hodu, has a double meaning. It means both to give thanks, but it also means turkey.

### **I. There are to be No Leftovers**

- 1 That's certainly one of the great differences between their thanksgiving meals and our Thanksgiving celebration.
- 2 Leftovers are a big part of Thanksgiving for us; some people end up eating turkey and cranberry sandwiches for a week.

#### **A. Thanksgiving is a part of peace**

- 1 It's interesting that of all of the offerings and sacrifices given unto the Lord, the people only participated in eating of the peace offerings.
- 2 There were three types of the peace offering; there was the peace offering for thanksgiving, the votive offering for a vow, and the freewill offering.
- 3 Remember that the peace offering was given not for the hope of obtaining peace, but because peace was already received.

- 4 We see several scriptures in the New Testament that tell us that thanksgiving and peace in our hearts come together.

**Colossians 3:15-16, Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.**

- 5 In the thanksgiving offering, they were to eat of the meal with the Lord. Some was burnt on the altar, some was given to the priests who ate it as God's representative, and some was eaten by the family at home.
- 6 For the Hebrews, eating together was of great significance. It was a picture of commonality, or communion, or oneness of relationship.

**Illus – We had an opportunity to be with an African family and watch their traditions of eating a meal.**

**Illus – The Hebrews would also eat without forks in those days. They would tear off a piece of bread, take a piece meat with it, and dip it into a common bowl of sauce, thus sharing everything together.**

**Illus – This is why it was an the accusation when the Pharisees said of Jesus, “He eats with publicans and sinners.”**

#### B. Thanksgiving makes us fully satisfied

- 7 There are only three places in scripture where they were instructed to eat all of a meal and have nothing left over and each of them meant something different.
- 8 The Passover Lamb was to not see decay, so anything remaining at morning must be burned with fire. They were to gather only enough manna for one day to demonstrate their faith in trusting God for each day's bread.
- 9 The thanksgiving offering was to be fully eaten as a demonstration of being fully satisfied in God

**Illus – in many cultures eating everything demonstrates that you are completely satisfied.**

- 10 Likewise, the Thanksgiving meal for us is a day of being fully satisfied, no counting calories, just enjoying, eating to the full and having fellowship.
- 11 If you have a lack of thanksgiving, then you have a lack in being satisfied. It is only in being thankful that our souls are full.

12 But having thanksgiving offering is more than a meal, it is a condition of the heart and God knows that having thanksgiving in the heart makes us a very happy people.

13 The writer of the book of Hebrews captures this perfectly.

**Hebrews 13:15, Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.**

14 God does not need our affirmation, God has no self doubts. The point is that God knows that we need to offer a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips because of what it does in us.

### C. Thanksgiving is a sacrifice

15 Thanksgiving is a sacrifice because our flesh doesn't want to be thankful.

16 In our flesh we want to feel sorry for ourselves, we want to be cynical, and grumpy, and caustic, and say every rude thing we feel. If our flesh doesn't feel good, we want everyone to know it.

17 But if you want to have a full and blessed life, than you need to have a grateful and thankful heart.

18 If we only see the imperfections in ourselves and in others and focus on imperfections then we will have little to be thankful for.

**Illus – There is a story of a man in Budapest who had a complaint and went to see the rabbi, “Life is terrible, there are nine of us living in one room.”**

19 But when you learn to turn things over to the Lord, with a heart of thanksgiving, then the soul becomes satisfied and peace rules in your heart.

**Philippians 4:4,6-7, Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ...Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

**Psalms 92:1-2, It is good to give thanks to the Lord and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; to declare Your lovingkindness in the morning and Your faithfulness by night,**

## II. A Heart of Thanksgiving Honors God

- 1 Verses 31-33 speaks of God's heart that they should honor Him, or sanctify Him, in their hearts.
- 2 *I sanctify you so I want you to sanctify Me*, God is saying.

### A. Thanksgiving is a freewill offering

- 1 In other words, God did not require them to have a heart of thanksgiving; He allowed this to be something that they could offer of their own free will.
- 1 The New King James reads verse 29 in this way, "*And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord, offer it of your own free will.*"
- 2 If you want to honor God, then having a heart of thanksgiving is certainly one way to do exactly that...

### **Psalm 50:23, He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me;**

- 3 When we come to God and respond to Him of our own free will, then our hearts are blessed because of it.

**Illus – When we're training up our kids, we often make them do things that they really don't want to do. For example, Johnny bonks Billy over the head with a toy truck and we say, "Now tell Billy you're sorry!" The problem is that Johnny doesn't mean a word of it!**

- 1 The truth is that it is not just important what we do, but why we do it. If we say we love God, then this will be seen in the way we live, but the reasons for what we do as well.

**Proverbs 16:2, All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the Lord weighs the motives.**

- 2 But it is God's best for you and He knows how to bless you life!

### B. Be thankful even for the difficult things

- 2 There is an amazing aspect of the thanksgiving offering that many people do not

see, but is actually very important to understand.

- 3 In all of the offerings, when they were to bring bread, it was to be unleavened, which was a picture of sin, trials, and difficulties.
- 4 But with the offering of thanksgiving, they were to bring both leavened and unleavened bread in the offering of thanksgiving.

**Leviticus 7:12, “If he offers it by way of thanksgiving, then along with the sacrifice of thanksgiving he shall offer unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil, and cakes of well stirred fine flour mixed with oil.”**

**Leviticus 7:13, “With the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving, he shall present his offering with cakes of leavened bread.”**

- 5 Many see this as an important lesson of faith, that they were to, and we are to, thank God for the trials and difficulties, in other words, what we would think of as bad things, because in faith we believe that God is able to work through these things for His glory and our good.
- 6 Paul gave us this example in his own life when he wrote to the church in Corinth...

**2 Corinthians 12:10, Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.**

- 7 This is where the believer is distinct from those who have no faith because we know that God is able to use difficulties in our lives and we trust Him by faith that He will work in our lives for His glory and our good.

**Illus – During the Depression...**

**Romans 5:3-4, And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;**

C. Enter His courts with thanksgiving

- 8 Lastly, Psalm 100 gives us an insight into how God wants us to come near to Him...

**Psalm 100:4-5, Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations.**

- 9 Then when you are going through the valley of Baca, you can make it a spring.  
(Psalm 84:6)